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EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATION IN INDIAN COUNTRY: BUILDING A FOUNDATION FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

HEARING

BEFORE THE

COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS
UNITED STATES SENATE

ONE HUNDRED THIRTEENTH CONGRESS

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EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATION IN INDIAN COUNTRY: BUILDING A FOUNDATION FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 2014

U.S. SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS,
Washington, DC.

The Committee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:30 p.m. in room 628, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Jon Tester, Chairman of the Committee, presiding.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. JON TESTER, U.S. SENATOR FROM MONTANA

The CHAIRMAN. Good afternoon, and welcome.

Today marks my first hearing as Chairman of this Committee, and I look forward to working with each of my colleagues, including my ranking member, to address the challenges that are facing American Indians and Alaska Natives across this Country.

I grew up neighbors to Indian Country. I am humbled by the responsibility to serve it in this position. I know that every member of this Committee shares my commitment to ensure the tribes in Indian communities have every opportunity to succeed and grow and that we are protecting and honoring our responsibilities to Indian Country.

I also want to begin my tenure here as Chairman with a little action and an extended invitation to my colleagues on this Committee, whether you are here today or watching, to come up to me with any bills that we might be able to take up in this Committee so that we can move them out of this Committee quickly, get them to the Senate Floor, and move them onto the President's desk. I am looking forward to taking action on the important legislation that is so meaningful for our constituents and utilizing this Committee to continue to move Indian Country forward.

Speaking of moving Indian Country forward, today's hearing is on Early Childhood Development and Education in Indian Country: Building a Foundation for Academic Success, the first of what I hope will be a series of hearings to examine the educational needs in Indian Country. This is a very important issue to the tribes in my home State of Montana and across this Country. Just last week I toured several reservations in Montana and education was a

prominent concern that was brought up in all of these communities.

As a former educator, I know first-hand the impacts of quality education and what those impacts can have on our youth throughout their lives. I believe that improving these opportunities can be a starting point for addressing man of the issues that are so prevalent throughout much of Indian Country.

Today we are going to focus specifically on early childhood education. Among the many benefits of early intervention and supporting early childhood development is the potential for increasing family and community involvement and the lives of our children. When we invest in early childhood, we are investing not only in the child but the family and the community around him or her. And to me, that is a good policy.

Another important benefit that I want to highlight and that I know we will discuss in further depth today is the ability of our programs to support Native languages and help preserve and protect these important connections to Native culture and identity, which is something I strongly support. There are many programs under the Federal umbrella that provide early childhood development and education for Native children. We need to look at whether these programs are operating efficiently and effectively and to see what steps we need to be taking in Congress, if any, to improve the quality of early childhood education that Native children are receiving.

Our witnesses represent a wide array of Indian programs that provide early childhood education on tribal lands, including the Department of Health and Human Services Child Care Development Block Grant Recipient and the Family and Child Education program supported by the Bureau of Indian Education at the Department of Interior. Another witness is an administrator from the tribal division of education, Dr. Costello from Duke University, who has joined us to discuss the impacts that early investment in a child's life can have on the long-term outcome for that child.

Before that, we will be hearing from the Department of Health and Human Services. I am excited to learn that the Department's witness is a fellow Montanan. I look forward to hearing from all our witnesses today about early childhood development and education programs operating in Indian Country. I welcome suggestions for what Congress can do to improve these programs.

In particular, I hope we can discuss how these programs are working together. Several programs and services are often similar or duplicative. And we must make these programs more efficient and at the same time ensure that Native youth are provided with the best opportunities to lead fulfilling and protective academic lives.

I want to thank the witnesses for traveling a long way to Washington, D.C. to present your perspective on this important issue. With that, I will turn to Senator Barrasso, Ranking Member Barrasso, for his statement.

STATEMENT OF HON. JOHN BARRASSO,
U.S. SENATOR FROM WYOMING

Senator BARRASSO. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, for holding this hearing on early childhood development and education in Indian Country. I want to begin by welcoming you, Senator Tester, to your new role as Chairman of the Committee on Indian Affairs. I look forward to continuing to work with you and continuing this Committee's longstanding tradition of bipartisanship.

Over the years, the Committee has held several oversight hearings on education in Indian Country, as you mentioned. The consistent message from tribal leaders has been that education for their people is among the highest of all priorities.

We all know that a quality education is a critical factor for success in today's world. The earlier it can start for children, the better. So I look forward to hearing how well Indian children are being prepared for tomorrow and what improvements are still needed.

I also want to welcome the witnesses to today's hearing. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Barrasso.

Senator Heitkamp?

STATEMENT OF HON. HEIDI HEITKAMP,
U.S. SENATOR FROM NORTH DAKOTA

Senator HEITKAMP. Thank you, and I guess I should congratulate my good friend from Montana, Jon Tester, on taking over on this Committee. I think he is somebody who completely understands the challenge of many of the tribes that live in North Dakota and certainly the large land tribes. Being an educator, I think he shares the concerns of so many of us regarding Indian education.

Just to tell a story, a tribal chairman in my State, Standing Rock, recently talked to me. His whole focus was education. He said, do you ever watch the little kids run to the bus on the reservation? They run and their spirits are high. It seems to soar. He said, then they get kind of in sixth grade and they walk to the bus. And then they get to high school and they walk away from the bus. Something happens there, from that exuberant spirit of starting an education and opportunity to walking away from education. This is the hope, that when we all work together and we begin to have hearings like this, begin to talk about how we can solve these problems, that we will see educational achievements, at least equal to the other residents of my State, within Indian Country.

I know we can accomplish that, because it is not about the limitations of the child, it is about the limitations of the system. So thank you, Mr. Chairman, for holding this hearing. Ranking Member Barrasso, I share with you your concerns and hope that I can be part of any solution discussions that we have as a result.

The CHAIRMAN. And you will be. Thank you for your comments.

Now I would like to welcome the first panel, the first panel is a panel of one. I would like to welcome that panelist, Ms. Linda Smith, Deputy Assistant Secretary and Inter-Departmental Liaison for Early Childhood Development at the Administration for Children and Families. You will be presenting the views of the Depart-

ment of Health and Human Services. Welcome, Linda, we look forward to your testimony, and you may begin.

And if you could keep it to five minutes, we would appreciate it. Your full testimony will be a part of the record.

STATEMENT OF LINDA K. SMITH, DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY/INTER–DEPARTMENTAL LIAISON FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT, ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Ms. SMITH. Chairman Tester, Vice Chairman Barrasso and members of the Committee, I am pleased to be here today, and especially to discuss early childhood education in Indian Country.

First I want to congratulate you, sir, as you convene your first hearing as Chair of this Committee. And I think it is amazing that it happens to be on early childhood education, where we know it all begins.

It is my honor to serve as Deputy Assistant Secretary for Early Childhood Development at the Administration for Children and Families. I am responsible for tribal home visitation, child care, Head Start and Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge. The Early Learning Challenge, by the way, is jointly administered with the Department of Education.

I am a native of Montana and was born and raised on the Flathead Reservation in Northwestern Montana. In fact, I volunteered in one of the first Indian Head Start programs on the reservation. That experience still influences many of the decisions I make today.

My first paid position in the early learning field was in the Northern Cheyenne Reservation where I was hired by the tribal community action program to set up a child care program. I have witnessed first-hand the differences that these programs can make for our Native American children's school readiness and family stability.

Through our work with tribes, we are seeing improved conditions in Indian Country. For example, in Minnesota, we funded the Alliance for Early Childhood Professionals to expand early learning environments in the Dakota and Ojibwe languages. Children in the program report a new sense of self-awareness, improved academic performance and are more active participants in school. The wider Ojibwe and Dakota community also report a renewed sense of pride and hope as they see children speaking their native languages. As one teacher said, if we revitalize our language, we revitalize our people.

Despite the progress, much remains to be done. In 2010, over 28 percent of American Indians lived in poverty, compared to just over 15 percent of the total population. Of those over age 25, 77 percent had a high school diploma and 13 percent had a bachelor's degree, compared with 86 and 28 percent, respectively, for the U.S. population. Twenty-eight percent of Native American households with children were food insecure, compared with 16 percent of non-Indian households. And finally, Native American children are more likely to experience violence, substance abuse and neglect.

Given these facts, we are working to improve the well-being and early education of Native American children. Our efforts reflect the President's Early Learning Initiative, which starts with home visitation as the early point for early childhood services and continues to school entry. The tribal home visitation program is administered by ACF in collaboration with the Health Resources and Services Administration. It is funded by a 3 percent setaside from the Maternal Infant and Early Childhood Home Visitation Program.

The program supports the development of Native American children through voluntary, culturally-appropriate, evidence-based home visiting. To date, we have competitively awarded 25 grants totaling over $32 million to tribes and urban Indian organizations. Over 100 tribal entities have applied for funding.

As a part of our home visiting efforts, we are exploring ways to validate an early childhood developmental screening instrument in Native populations to ensure that children are appropriately screened for developmental delays at the earliest possible times. We know that the earlier the delays are identified, the sooner children can receive services and the better their odds are for success.

In tribal communities, the Child Care and Development Fund plays a crucial role in supporting parents as they move toward economic self-sufficiency and improving learning for children. CCDF, as it is known, is authorized by the Child Care and Development block grant. It provides funding to 260 tribes that either directly or through consortia arrangements administer child care programs for over 500 federally-recognized tribes. The tribes receive up to 2 percent of CCDF funding, or about $100 million. In 2011, approximately 30,000 children were served with this program.

Tribal grantees incorporate culturally-relevant activities into their child care programs. For example, the Chippewa Cree Tribe on Rocky Boy's Reservation in Montana blended child care funding with funding from the Administration for Native Americans to create language immersion child care programs from birth to three. In addition to child care, we provide funding for 150 Head Start programs across 26 States. These programs serve more than 22,000 children by providing comprehensive health, education, nutrition and other services. Family engagement is strong. Last year, over 24,000 parents and community members served as volunteers. Funding for this fiscal year is over $123 million.

Our tribal Head Start programs have worked hard to improve school readiness and meet the new teacher requirements required by Congress. Today, 70 percent of all preschool teachers have an associate degree and 32 percent have a BA degree or higher.

HHS partners with the Department of Education to administer the Early Learning Challenge program. This program supports 20 States in developing new approaches to close the school readiness gap and improve our systems. States actively partner with tribal programs. For example, Minnesota is working directly with the White Earth Reservation, which is among Minnesota's poorest communities. Funds support school readiness scholarships, workforce development and health consultation to child care providers.

Lastly, I would like to thank Congress for appropriating the $500 million to improve the quality of programs for infants and toddlers through the Early Head Start Child Care Partnership program.

This year, at least $15 million of that money will be available to programs in tribal communities.

In closing, let me say that we at ACF are committed to ensuring that programs are responsive to the tribal community's values, needs, traditions and priorities. I appreciate the Committee's interest in this issue and I would welcome and be happy to address any questions that you have.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Smith follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF LINDA K. SMITH, DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY/INTER-DEPARTMENTAL LIAISON FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT, ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Chairman Tester, Vice Chairman Barrasso and members of the Committee, I am pleased to appear at this hearing to discuss early childhood development and education in Indian Country. I want to take a moment to congratulate Chairman Tester as he convenes his first hearing as the Chairman of this Committee and to thank the former Chair, Senator Cantwell, for her work to improve the outcomes for children and families in Indian Country. The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) looks forward to continuing to work with the Chairman and the other Members of this Committee.

It is my honor to serve as Deputy Assistant Secretary and Interdepartmental Liaison for Early Childhood Development at HHS's Administration for Children and Families (ACF). Here at HHS, I am responsible for the Tribal Home Visitation, Child Care, Head Start and Early Head Start Programs and the Race to the Top—Early Learning Challenge program, which we jointly administer with the Department of Education.

I am a native of Montana and was born and raised on the Flathead Reservation in Northwestern Montana. In fact, I volunteered in one of the first Indian Head Start Programs on the Flathead Reservation and that experience influences many of my decisions today. My first position in the early learning field was on the Northern Cheyenne Reservation where I was hired by the Tribal Community Action Program to set up a child care program, following that I set up a preschool program for children aged two to five at the St. Labre Indian Mission. I witnessed first-hand the difference that such programs can make for our Native American children's school readiness and for their families' stability.

I bring this background to my current position and that is why I am so pleased to be here today. I am passionate about the need to better serve our Native American communities. Through ACF's work with tribes, we are seeing improved conditions in Indian Country. For example, in Minnesota we funded the Alliance of Early Childhood Professional to expand preschool program capacity to provide challenging and stimulating learning environments in the Dakota and Ojibwe languages. Children in the program report a new sense of self-awareness, improved academic performance and more active participation in school. The wider Ojibwe and Dakota community also reported a renewed sense of pride and hope as they see children speaking their Native language. As one teacher said, "If we revitalize our language, we revitalize our people."

Another ACF funded project, a summer camp in the Native Village of Afognak, Alaska, is connecting children with their heritage and helping them form positive, supportive relationships with Tribal elders. These youth are also demonstrating improved communication and conflict resolution skills.

Despite the progress being made, there is much work that remains to be done. In the 2010 to 2011 school year, the percentage of children and youth served under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act was highest for American Indians/Alaska Natives. In 2010, approximately 28.4 percent of the AI/AN population lived in poverty compared to approximately 15.3 percent of the total population. In 2010, unemployment on Indian reservations was at approximately 50 percent and 49 percent of AI/AN children lived with parents who lacked secure employment compared to approximately 33 percent of the total U.S. population. In 2010, of those aged 25 and older, approximately 77 percent had a high school diploma and approximately 13 percent had a bachelor's degree, compared to approximately 86 percent and 28 percent respectively for the entire U.S. population. The AI/AN population has approximately 1.6 times the infant mortality rate of the non-Hispanic White population and AI/AN infants are approximately 1.7 times as likely to die from Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). They are approximately 2.5 times as likely as Non-Hispanic White infants to have mothers who began prenatal care in the third tri-

mester or did not receive prenatal care at all. Children in AI/AN families are more likely to experience violence, substance abuse and neglect. A study of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES) in seven tribes found that approximately 86 percent of participants had one or more adverse experiences and approximately 33 percent had four or more. Finally, approximately 28 percent of AI/AN households with children were food insecure, compared to approximately 16 percent of non-AI/AN households.

Given these facts, HHS is moving forward through a number of programs to improve the well-being and education of AI/AN children. ACF has four important programs that serve children prenatally through school entry that I will discuss. These efforts mirror the President's Early Learning Initiative, which starts with home visiting as the entry point for early childhood services through the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) Program and also includes:

- The Child Care and Development Fund;
- Early Head Start and Head Start Programs;
- The Race to the Top—Early Learning Challenge Program; and
- The Tribal Early Learning Initiative.

In addition to these programs, the Administration for Native Americans, an office within ACF, supports projects targeted to education, including early education. We also work collaboratively with the Department of Education, which administers the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). IDEA Part C and Part B, Section 619 funds are distributed directly to Tribes through the Bureau of Indian Education for the coordination of services for AI/AN children with disabilities. Finally, we are currently working to implement the Early Head Start/Child Care Partnerships funded this year by the Omnibus Appropriations Act.

Tribal Home Visiting

The Tribal Home Visiting Program is administered by ACF in collaboration with the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) and is funded by a three percent set-aside within the MIECHV Program. The Tribal program supports the development of happy, healthy, and successful AI/AN children and families through voluntary, high quality, culturally relevant, home visiting services that address critical maternal and child health, child development and early learning, family support, and child abuse and neglect prevention needs and promote linkages among the various early childhood programs. Home visiting programs serve pregnant women, expectant fathers, parents and primary caregivers of children from birth through kindergarten entry.

The Tribal Home Visiting Program is an evidence-based program. ACF conducted a systematic review of home visiting models previously implemented in tribal communities and found that none met HHS "evidence-based" criteria for use with AI/AN populations. Home visiting models selected by tribal home visiting grantees are considered "promising approaches" and must be rigorously evaluated to contribute to the evidence base. Models selected by tribal home visiting grantees include Parents as Teachers, Family Spirit, Nurse Family Partnership, Parent-Child Assistance Program, Healthy Families America, SafeCare, and Healthy Steps.

To date, we have competitively awarded 25 grants totaling $32.5 million to three cohorts of tribes, consortia of tribes, tribal organizations and Urban Indian Organizations. Tribal interest in the program is very strong; over 100 tribal entities from 25 states have applied for funding. Tribal Home Visiting grantees, such as the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes and the Northern Arapaho Tribe on the Wind River Reservation, are located in 14 states, including Montana, Wyoming, Washington, Arizona, Alaska, New Mexico, and Minnesota. Grants were awarded for five-year periods. Additionally, HRSA's state Home Visiting Program in 11 states is currently working with 24 tribal communities to provide evidence-based home visiting services.

ACF provides extensive technical assistance to grantees through a Tribal Home Visiting Technical Assistance Center, the Tribal Home Visiting Evaluation Institute and a Tribal Early Childhood Research Center that supports leadership and promotes community-based participation in the research and evaluation of the program.

Tribal Home Visiting grantees have had many successes in developing, implementing, and evaluating programs that meet the needs of their communities. This includes using the needs assessment process as a community engagement strategy; involving elders and community members throughout planning, implementation, and evaluation; capacity building for implementation of evidence-based practices, data collection, research, and evaluation; innovations in cultural adaptation and service delivery; and service integration and systems building. The Tribal Home Vis-

iting grants have been seen by many tribal communities as a source of hope, transformation, and healing to recover from generations of trauma and loss.

As a part of the Tribal Home Visiting Program, we are exploring possible ways to validate an early childhood development screening instrument in Native American populations to ensure that children are appropriately and adequately screened for developmental delays as early as possible. We know that the earlier delays are identified, the sooner children can receive the services they need, and the better their odds for success will be.

Additionally, tribes or tribal organizations receive MIECHV funds from states via subcontracts. Eleven state MIECHV programs are currently working with 24 tribal communities to provide evidence-based home visiting service. Through statewide needs assessments these tribal communities have been identified as at-risk communities and have been prioritized to receive state MIECHV funding.

Child Care and Development Fund

In tribal communities, the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) plays a crucial role in offering child care options to parents as they move toward economic self-sufficiency, and in promoting learning and development for children. CCDF, which is authorized by the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) Act, is a dual purpose program with a two-generational impact, uniquely positioned to support both school readiness and family economic success. CCDF provides access to child care for low-income parents in order to enable them to work and gain economic independence, and it supports the long-term development of our Nation's most disadvantaged and vulnerable children by making investments to improve the quality of child care.

CCDF is especially important because it has such a broad reach in Indian Country. CCDF currently provides funding to approximately 260 tribes and tribal organizations that, either directly or through consortia arrangements, administer child care programs for over 500 federally-recognized Indian tribes. By law, tribes receive up to two percent of CCDF funding, or about $100 million. Tribal CCDF grantees, who served approximately 30,000 children in fiscal year 2011, are generally located in rural and economically challenged areas.

One of the key goals of CCDF is helping children from low-income families access high quality care. Tribal grantees are innovative in how they invest in quality, and many tribal grantees incorporate culturally-relevant activities into their child care programs. Tribes preserve their languages by developing child care curricula that focuses on Native American language. For example, the Chippewa-Cree Tribe of Rocky Boy's Reservation in Montana braided CCDF funding with grant funding from the Administration for Native Americans to create a language immersion child care program for children from birth to age three. The Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians in Maine invited Tribal Elders to teach children traditional stories in their native language. Given the research on the positive cognitive benefits of bi- or multilingualism, these are powerful innovations that have important impacts on young children. Tribal grantees also include traditional song and dance, regalia making, and other cultural activities to enrich children's learning experiences in child care and engage families in their children's care and education.

The CCDBG Act allows Tribal Lead Agencies to use CCDF funds for construction or renovation of child care facilities. Since 1997, 131 new child care facilities have been constructed. Within the new facilities, tribes have also included space for gardens with traditional plants and playgrounds that incorporate Tribal culture into the design.

Tribes also use CCDF to coordinate with Head Start and Tribal Home Visiting Programs and to pool resources. In some tribes, child care and Head Start funds are pooled to provide comprehensive services for tribal families and children. In other tribes, child care provides wraparound services for Head Start in order to accommodate parents' working and educational schedules. The Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians of Oregon uses CCDF and Head Start funds to pay a quality coordinator who oversees all classrooms at the tribe's child care center and ensures that all activities are developmentally appropriate and that any training needs of the staff are identified and addressed.

In addition, some Tribes use CCDF to provide inclusive child care and coordinated services for children with disabilities to meet the developmental and educational needs of each child. For example, the CCDF Early Childhood Program of the Bois Forte Band of Chippewa in Minnesota collaborates with the local school's Early Childhood Special Education Coordinator to ensure that children with disabilities are provided appropriate services such as Individual Education Plans and sign language interpreters.

CCDF acts as a key facilitator of tribal-state early childhood partnerships. Indian children have "dual eligibility" and are eligible to receive either state or tribal CCDF services. Tribes work together with states to leverage their CCDF resources and to reduce duplication of services.

Some tribes are also participating or preparing to participate in states' Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (QRIS). QRIS is a rating system of voluntary, higher standards for child care that provides financial incentives and technical assistance to providers as they move to higher standards of quality. QRIS also helps families find quality care by providing them program ratings. These partnerships with states and other federally-funded programs allow tribes to align CCDF with other early care and education programs so that more low-income, tribal children have access to high quality early education.

Head Start and Early Head Start Programs

Since 1965, the Office of Head Start (OHS) has provided funding to AI/AN tribes. In 1965, OHS funded 43 programs in 14 states. Today there are 150 Head Start Tribal programs, including 58 Early Head Start programs across 26 states. Tribal programs serve more than 22,000 Head Start and Early Head Start children and families and provide comprehensive health, education, nutrition, socialization and other developmental services. This represents approximately 50 percent of all AI/AN children and families served by Head Start and Early Head Start. The remaining AI/AN families are served by non-AI/AN Head Start and Early Head Start programs. Total AI/AN Tribal program funding for this year is over $123 million.

The size of AI/AN programs varies from the smallest program with just 15 children to the largest program with over 2,100 children, 1,300 of whom speak a Native American language or language other than English in their homes.

Federal staff provides direct oversight and ongoing support to AI/AN programs. Training and Technical Assistance (T/TA) is also provided through three components: Direct T/TA funding to grantees; AI/AN T/TA Centers; and, National T/TA Centers.

Tribal Head Start programs have worked hard to improve quality, focus on school readiness and meet the new teacher credential requirements mandated by the Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007. Although AI/AN programs face many challenges in meeting the new requirements, they have shown steady improvement since 2008 in increasing the number of teachers with credentials. Today, approximately 70 percent of all preschool teachers have an associate degree and approximately 32 percent of those teachers have earned a baccalaureate or higher degree.

Family engagement and community involvement remain strong within AI/AN Head Start and Early Head Start programs and just last year over 24,000 parents and community members served as volunteers. A majority of tribal programs have partnerships with their local schools, which result in alignment of school readiness goals, inclusive opportunities and IDEA services for children with disabilities, and successful transition from Head Start to kindergarten.

Approximately eighty-five percent of children served in AI/AN Head Start programs have health insurance and approximately 95 percent have a consistent source of health services, many are served through Indian Health Services. Again, these figures are much higher than those of the general AI/AN population.

In 2011, ACF issued a final rule for the Head Start program that requires grantees to compete, as part of the Designation Renewal process, for further funding if they meet one of seven conditions. This new regulation, central to the 2007 Head Start reauthorization, is a means for continuing to improve quality of grantee services to children. In accordance with the Head Start Act, tribal programs are not required to compete for funding if they meet one of the seven conditions. However, they are required to enter into a 12 month government-to-government consultation and receive intensive training and technical assistance to improve program quality.

At the end of the 12 months, OHS must conduct a re-evaluation to determine if a tribal program will be required to compete for continued funding.

The Office of Head Start continues to honor and respect our government-to-government relationship with all tribes through continued consultation and collaboration throughout the Designation Renewal process. Thus far, all AI/AN programs that have been required to engage in the 12 month consultation and program improvement process and have undergone re-evaluation have been successful and will now receive their first five-year grant.

Race to the Top—Early Learning Challenge

HHS partners with the Department of Education to administer the Race to the Top—Early Learning Challenge program. This program supports 20 states in devel-

oping new approaches and systems to raise the bar across early learning and child development programs and to close the school readiness gap.

Although states are the eligible entities for the Race to the Top Program—Early Learning Challenge, many of the 20 Early Learning Challenge grantees are actively implementing the program in AI/AN communities. For example, Minnesota is working directly with four target communities, one of which is the White Earth Reservation which is among Minnesota's poorest communities. Minnesota will fully implement its state plan with intensive concentration in these four target communities through a multi-pronged approach to preparing children for school. Among the activities Minnesota is undertaking with the White Earth Reservation are: supporting scholarships to early childhood educators that would enhance workforce development in the community, providing grant awards to child care providers in the community to provide child care health consultation, and training child care health consultants through the Minnesota Department of Health. Minnesota, as part of its TQRIS expansion efforts, will try to expand high-quality and early care and education to difficult-to-reach families by conducting focus groups with families in high-need communities. Through these focus groups the grantee team will generate new outreach tactics that are geared toward specific communities, including Native American communities in the state.

Tribal Early Learning Initiative

Since 2012, ACF has partnered with four tribes on the Tribal Early Learning Initiative (TELI). The program supports tribes in their efforts to fully coordinate all early learning programs to better meet the needs of children and families and raise the quality of services to children prenatal through age five. The TELI is a "learning laboratory" focused on quality improvement and innovation. We work with the tribes to identify and address obstacles that could block efforts to meet the needs of their populations. Tribal activities include creating a single tribal early learning program enrollment form to be used by all programs, investing in a data system to allow sharing of relevant data across early learning programs, conducting joint dental services for children and holding joint professional development opportunities across programs. The participating tribes are the:

- Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma
- White Earth Band of Chippewa of Minnesota
- Pueblo of San Felipe of New Mexico
- Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes of Montana

The Administration for Native Americans

The Administration on Native Americans (ANA), within ACF, not only supports projects that address poverty, but also related projects supporting education, including early childhood education. Over the last five years ANA has awarded an average of $40.8 million annually in time-limited project grants to promote social and economic self-sufficiency, including projects that have established, strengthened, or enhanced early childhood services for children and families.

In fiscal year 2013, ANA awarded approximately $4.1 million in nineteen new language grants combined with $9 million in continuation funding for forty existing language grants. ANA language funding provides opportunities for Native American communities to assess, plan, develop and implement projects to ensure the survival and continuing vitality of Native American languages and to promote social unity and self-sufficiency. Examples of funded programs include:

- The Crow Tribe of Indians for a Native American language nest for pre-school children enrolled in Head Start and reservation-based child care programs.
- The Salish Language Acquisition Project to provide language training immersion to school teachers to increase the instructional capacity both in schools and in the community.
- The Piegan Institute for instruction in the Blackfeet language to increase parent and community engagement in language learning.

Recent ANA grants have supported the use of Native American language speakers as instructors in Early Head Start and Head Start classrooms, the creation of immersion classrooms in Head Start centers, the development or adaptation of early childhood curricula that is linguistically responsive to Native American early childhood care and education settings, and early childhood teacher development through partnerships with local tribal colleges or universities or through master-apprentice training programs. Because of their flexibility, ANA funds have been critical to language program enhancement, quality improvement for existing or emergent languages, and Native American language instruction.

Beyond its project funding, approximately $3 million in ANA funding provides T/TA designed to help AI/AN communities develop and sustain self-determined programs that support Native social and economic development strategies and language preservation and maintenance. ANA provides T/TA through four regional training and technical assistance centers. Between fiscal years 2009 and 2012, ANA conducted 771 Project Planning and Development trainings and 1,189 Pre-Application trainings.

The T/TA program vision is for AI/AN community members to gain the skills to help their communities achieve long-range goals. The ANA T/TA program approach is based on facilitating connections of Native community members with federal partners and advocates. In 2012, the regional T/TA centers established Virtual Community Centers (VCCs) as on-line spaces for grantees to network, identify partners, and share information. The Native Languages VCC supports indigenous and Native American language program development and sustainability, as well as seeks to foster greater collaboration amongst ANA language program grantees and practitioners. ANA T/TA centers also conduct webinars on various topics identified by Native communities as needed. In 2012, ANA T/TA centers held a total of 34 webinars attended by 629 participants.

Early Head Start/Child Care Partnerships

Lastly, I would like to thank Congress for appropriating $500 million to increase the quality of child care for infants and toddlers through partnerships with the Early Head Start program. This means that at least $15 million will be available to fund partnerships between Early Head Start programs and child care centers and family child care homes in Tribal communities. We believe that these partnerships will have a significant impact in improving access and quality care for AI/AN infants and toddlers.

We have already met with representatives of the tribal child care community to solicit input for this program and are currently developing the details. We are eager to use the lessons learned from the TELI project to inform this work.

As with all of our nation's early learning programs, there is more that could be done to provide more high quality, stable programs for all of our youngest and most vulnerable citizens. As the President's Early Learning Initiative demonstrates, we are committed to learning from what we are currently doing to inform our future home visiting, child care and Head Start programs and to ensure that they in turn are responsive to tribal communities' values, traditions and priorities.

I very much appreciate the Committee's interest in this issue and the opportunity to speak with you today. I look forward to working together to continue to improve services to our American Indian and Alaskan Native communities. I would be happy to address any questions.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you for your testimony. I appreciate it very much.

I do have some questions and then we will get to the other members of the Committee.

You mentioned that the models used for home visiting are not evidence-based but rather they are considered promising practices.

Ms. SMITH. Yes.

The CHAIRMAN. How are you collecting data on these programs to see if the results add up?

Ms. SMITH. We have a very strong evaluation component to the tribal home visitation program. One of the reasons that we don't have evidence-based programs in tribal programs is because the programs that are approved for use in the States, (I think we have approved 14 of them) have not been validated in tribal communities. So we really had to think of a different way to do that.

At the end of probably this year, we will see the first one, we think, validated in tribal populations. It was one that was specifically designed for Native American families. We are conducting an extensive research-based evaluation of the different models, and we should have much better data probably within the next two years.

The CHAIRMAN. Could you give me an insight on what kinds of metrics are being used to develop the results?

Ms. SMITH. We have a number of different metrics that we are evaluating. What we have are benchmarks that we have set up for the individual programs. The communities have proposed the benchmarks and how they are going to meet the various requirements of the home visitation program. So, in particular, things like is there a reduction in infant mortality? Is there an increase in school readiness? The measurements vary, depending on what the tribe has selected. But they are all designed to fold into the benchmarks for the overall program.

The CHAIRMAN. Okay. Well, I would just say, I would hope that you would be tracking the students along the way to see if there is—I mean, infant mortality is very, very important—but also to see how well they are doing in school compared to kids who came from similar economic backgrounds and did not have the program.

Ms. SMITH. I will get back to you on that for the record.

The CHAIRMAN. Just so you know, my goal is, I think early childhood is a huge bang for the buck. But we have to make sure that it is a huge bang for the buck. If we put money in it and it doesn't end up doing any good, then we have to change what we are doing.

Ms. SMITH. Right.

The CHAIRMAN. So in order to do that, you have to evaluate and you have to track and all that good stuff that nobody likes to do, but it is a necessary evil of the job.

Another question. In your testimony you mentioned four separate programs at HHS that serve early childhood development needs. You have Child Care and Development Fund, you have Early Head Start, you have Race to the Top, you have Tribal Early Learning Initiative, and there are some other programs, I think, including the Administration for Native Americans. Is there any coordination between these programs where tribes are receiving multiple grants from multiple programs that potentially could be serving the same kids?

Ms. SMITH. Absolutely. This is one of the reasons for the Tribal Early Learning Initiative. I know Barbara Fabre is going to testify after me, and she is one of the sites where we have that initiative going on. One of the things that I first did when I got into this job was to try and take a look at how we could break down the stovepipes and the barriers between child care, Head Start, Early Head Start and home visiting. So we have funded four communities to look at how they can do that. We are using those as learning laboratories for how we will do this throughout the Country. I visited a reservation right after coming into the job and saw real disparity between the Head Start program and the child care program. And it makes no sense to me, with two federally-funded programs, to not have more continuity in the quality of what is going on.

So we are very seriously looking at that and working on how we can bring these programs into a more blended, braided approach. There is no question about that.

The CHAIRMAN. Okay, at this point in time, though, would you say the coordination exists, or are you still working on coordination?

Ms. SMITH. I would say it exists some places and we are working on it in others.

The CHAIRMAN. Okay. Senator Barrasso?

Senator BARRASSO. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the testimony. Your written testimony mentioned that a majority of tribal Head Start programs have a partnership with their local schools. These partnerships result in an alignment of school readiness goals and a successful transition from Head Start to kindergarten. What can be done to encourage more partnerships, state-tribal partnerships and even other programs to increase early educational opportunities?

Ms. SMITH. I think what one of the reasons that we are trying what we are doing with the other initiative is to incentivize this to happen and give people the incentive and the time to sit down and plan these things together. What I have found in the work that we have done with the projects that we have now is that there are a lot of misperceptions out there about the different funding streams and why they can't work together. What we are trying to do is sit down with folks and say, no, this isn't a barrier. And if it is, we are willing to go back and look at that and fix it. So we have spent a fair amount of time looking at different items that people think are problems and they really aren't. I think that is one of the things we are learning out of the Tribal Early Learning Initiative project, is we need to do a better job of being clear about the expectations that go along with the different funding streams.

Senator BARRASSO. In your written testimony and even some of your oral presentation, you noted the family engagement and community involvement that remains strong within the Indian Early Head Start programs. You said last year over 24,000 parents and community members served as volunteers for Head Start and Early Head Start programs. Last week, I was at home in Wyoming and, on the Wind River Reservation, at the Wind River School visiting with students. A number of parents were there for part of that visit.

How do you think parents could become more involved in their children's early education and development and then stay involved? It's kind of what we heard from Senator Heitkamp, running to school, walking to school, running away from school. This is very telling. We want to get the parents equally engaged. Any thoughts you would have on that?

Ms. SMITH. I think this is one of the good news stories from the Head Start program, to be honest with you. Anyone who has been affiliated with the Head Start program knows that they really encourage parent engagement, family engagement. I think that number demonstrates that.

What we really need to do is figure out how we bridge that into the public school system. Because it becomes harder in the public school system to engage parents in the same way, because parents don't have to take their children to the classroom and pick them up from the classroom, so they lose that engagement with the teachers. It is automatic in the earliest years, because the children just simply have to go with parents.

So I think we need to come up with other strategies. We have between the Department of Education and HHS what we call an interagency policy board. And we are examining this very issue between the two agencies on how do we begin to really engage families in the education system, beginning at birth but continuing into

the public schools. It gets harder as time goes on. I understand that. But I think we want to look at that.

The other thing I would say is that we are interested, through our Office of Research at ACF, in looking more intently at what makes families engaged at one level and not the other. So we are aware of that.

Senator BARRASSO. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Heitkamp?

Senator HEITKAMP. I have quite a few questions, a lot of which I will submit for the record if that is possible.

But I want to pick up on this theme of coordination. For every one of those programs, there is probably a grant writer and then there is probably an auditor, and there is probably about 20 percent administrative cost that doesn't go to kids. But yet we all turf fight because we have our program and we like our program.

So I understanding trying to find it seamless. But people are going to find a way to say, we can't coordinate, unless somebody tells them that they have to coordinate or they are not going to get any of the money. And a lot of this should be directed locally. We should hold people accountable for those dollars and those resources, but we have absolutely got to engage the entire community, and in fact, the local government, which in this case is in many cases tribal government.

So I want you to do some serious thinking about how we can mandate, not just encourage, not just try and take down barriers, but require that there be a single focus with appropriate resources. And that focus should be the education of kids.

But I want to tell you, I had kind of a little wake-up call yesterday at my office. I was visiting with some grade school principals, one of which was in Mandan, my home town and the other one was in Bismarck. I asked them what the big issue was for them, and I thought it was going to be early childhood education, thought it was going to be No Child Left Behind. And both of them said, it is mental health. It is mental health problems within the community that they are serving. And they both serve populations, about a third of their kids are Native American kids, transitioning from spot to spot to spot. That is another whole issue, about the lack of consistency in education by moving around.

But I want to know what you are seeing in the work that you do and your agency does in mental health, and what you think can be done to address some of those concerns. I want you to focus in particular on what I think might be a problem, which is post-traumatic stress as a result of witnessing family violence.

Ms. SMITH. And I totally understand that, and that would not surprise me as an answer to that question. Because we hear that even in the earliest years. When you ask teachers in classrooms what is the most challenging thing they have to deal with, you can call it whatever you want to, behavior, social-emotional development, mental health issues, but one way or another we have issues surrounding that whole area. So I like to call it social-emotional development of our children.

I tend to think that it gets back to parents and parenting. We are going to have to pay more attention to how we help parents understand basic child development. I think some of what goes wrong

in communities, or with parents in some of the families is inappropriate expectations.

Senator HEITKAMP. And I get that. But let me tell you the story. Two little boys on the school bus beat up two little girls on the school bus. And when they get to the principal's office, they ask them why. They said because they want to see their dad, because last night their dad beat up their mom and he is in jail. So you can talk about parenting, but we have an immediate crisis situation that we need to deal with. I am wondering how, I mean, that is a long-term solution. But how do we deal with the emergency of that issue?

Ms. SMITH. I think we need to get better resources to our schools and to our early childhood providers. We know that we have a lack of trained people in this area available to these programs. There is no question about that. The whole area of mental health is front and center in so many ways. But we just lack the resources and the trained people, the skilled people for the ages of the children and the issues that we are dealing with.

Senator HEITKAMP. And I agree. So what are you doing to kind of look long-term at fixing that skills gap and helping those schools?

Ms. SMITH. My role is not with the schools necessarily. It is with the preschool component. But we are looking at that, and we are working with other areas of the Department of Health and Human Services. We have been working with SAHMSA, which does have the funding for social-emotional mental health issues, and HRSA and other colleagues throughout the Department of Health and Human Services to take this issue on.

I wouldn't sit here and say we have answers yet. Because it is very complicated. But we started this work about six months ago, and we have a very solid group, interagency group of people taking a look at it. Centers for Disease Control are involved in it with us, the Office of Special Education over at the Department of Education.

Senator HEITKAMP. Mr. Chairman, if I can ask, as you work through that, if you can make those reports available to us and that progress in addressing that issue available.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Heitkamp. I am going to ask a few more questions, and if you guys have a few more, you certainly can. I think we are going to have a little time, we have to be out of here by 4:00.

I have a couple of questions, Linda, and I would just say this before I ask these questions. Senator Heitkamp's questions are good, and I think it is important that the people in the Department start thinking about solutions to problems and how you can best address them. We know we have issues out there around mental health, we just had testimony at the last hearing we had, one in four kids are coming out with the same PTSD that soldiers are coming back with, same rate.

So we have to think about solutions to the problems, so that we can visit about them at this level and move forward. We will help you in that.

We will hear in the upcoming testimony of the next panel about the struggles that some tribal programs are having in meeting

class certification, particularly due to a scoring system that does not take into account differences in cultural communication styles. Is this an issue you are aware of and if so, what is ACF doing about it?

Ms. SMITH. This is actually a very interesting issue that we have had. I am aware of it and we have had a lot of conversations about it.

We were talking about this just yesterday afternoon. I think you are talking about the class rating scale for the recompetition of Head Start.

The CHAIRMAN. That is correct.

Ms. SMITH. The highest scoring programs in Head Start across the Country, not just in Indian Country, are in the Native American program. So I think this is one of those areas where there is a perception that it is a problem and it is probably not as real as it is thought to be. The highest score period and the only perfect score in a program is in the Native American program.

And it is not to say that they are all that way, but for the most part, the class is doing what it is intended to do.

The CHAIRMAN. Good enough.

Can you describe the partnership between home visiting models, Early Head Start, and Head Start, very briefly? Mainly I want to know, is there any duplication in those services.

Ms. SMITH. We are trying to make sure that there isn't. Now, one of the things that does get a little confusing is there is an Early Head Start home visitation model. And that is an approved model by the Department for use with home visitation funds. When that is the case, it is a program that is not duplicative of Head Start or Early Head Start, it is just a model that the program has chosen to use. Home visiting is a strength of the Head Start program and has been for a long time. So the model is selected fairly frequently, I think it is the third most used of the programs out there. So it isn't a duplication, but it may sound like it is.

The CHAIRMAN. I encourage partnerships in innovative use of funding. You talk about it in your testimony, the immersion program at Rocky Boy. I have heard from many tribal communities that one of the biggest areas that they need access to is quality health care. There are simply not enough slots around for the kids that need the child care, and when I said health care, I mean quality child care. There are not enough slots for the demand.

Is ACF doing anything to address the child care shortage, quality child care, I should say?

Ms. SMITH. Well, we have, as you may know, rewritten the Child Care regulation, which we took public comments on last year. We have now gone through all the comments and will publish a final rule some time this summer. Almost every modification done to the regulation has been about quality, about building better health and safety requirements into the program, about basic training, which was not there, about continuity of care for children, so that they can stay in the program and not be jerked around just randomly. We are establishing a minimum time that a child could stay before having their eligibility redetermined.

We have really taken that seriously. The whole new regulation looks at the quality issue. We are very concerned about it.

The CHAIRMAN. I got you. I heard you talk about quality health care, and I think it is very, very important. But what about the shortage of health care? I am sorry, I have health care on the mind, shortage of quality child care. What about the shortage?

Ms. SMITH. Well, sir, I think there is a shortage of quality child care across this Country. I would open with that. And that isn't to say it isn't a crisis in Native America communities, because it is.

We are limited by the law in terms of how much money we are allowed to put into the child care program. That is 2 percent of the total block grant. I think the panel that follows me may shed some light on that for you.

But we are aware of the problem. I think we wish we could do more.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Heitkamp, do you have any questions?

Senator HEITKAMP. No, thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. All right, well, thank you very much, Linda. We appreciate your testimony. While we are setting up the next panel, I will just tell you, while you were talking, there were folks behind you shaking their heads. I think there are a lot of folk who will help on the issues we talked about today with some consultation. Thank you.

As the next panel comes up, I will make a brief introduction of who is on that panel. They can further flesh out who they are once they start speaking.

Mr. Danny Wells is the Executive Officer for the Division of Education in the Chickasaw Nation in Ada, Oklahoma. Ms. Barbara Fabre is Chairperson of the National Indian Child Care Association and Director of Child Care/Early Childhood Program, White Earth Ojibwe Nation, White Earth, Minnesota. Ms. Jacquelyn Power is Superintendent/Principal of Blackwater Community School in Coolidge, Arizona. And Dr. E. Jane Costello is the Associate Director for Research, Center for Child and Family Policy, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina.

I appreciate all of your testimony that you have written in. We will give you five minutes. I am going to hold you pretty close to it, because I want to save a little time for questions. So if you will keep it close, your entire written testimony will be a part of the record. We will start out in an inappropriate fashion, we will let the guy go first. Mr. Danny Wells, you can go first.

[Laughter.]

STATEMENT OF DANNY WELLS, EXECUTIVE OFFICER, DIVISION OF EDUCATION, CHICKASAW NATION

Mr. WELLS. My name is Danny Wells. I am a Chickasaw tribal citizen, serve as the Executive Officer of the Division of Education, representing the Chickasaw Nation.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for allowing us the opportunity, and the Committee for allowing us the opportunity to provide best practices and also to address some challenges with regard to our early childhood development program.

One of the things I think we have discovered is that we all believe and we all know that an effective early childhood program is the foundation for academic success. To get an early start, to get a big start, to get a good start is key to success. The Chickasaw

Nation early childhood is comprised of two parts, Child Care and Head Start. Basically what we do is we have those two programs that are involved in our early childhood program. Within those, we have over 400 children that we serve in Child Care, 200 of which are served in our Early Childhood Development facility. We also serve 271 Head Start children at four different facilities.

What we find is that with a partnership between the two that they engage one another and it is a more seamless transition from one to the other. One of the things we want to make sure that we pass on is school readiness is a key focus, at least based on Head Start. From our perspective, it has always been a focus for us. School readiness has always been key for us, it has always been a focus for us. It is always something that has been of the upmost importance.

So when it was identified that that was a key, we already knew that. So what we did was basically, we simply tried to put it in a written format so that we could share that with others and when we were asked to share that with the Early Head Start, we had that ability. But again, that was already in place. As a matter of fact, most of our staff are former public school teachers, myself included.

And so when we start looking at different things that we can do, and we start looking at facts, what we find and identify that is key for us is to identify key staff. Certified, qualified teachers, that is key for us. And that is most important. So we focus on that.

I will also share with you that about 70 percent of our Head Start staff are Native. About 75 to 80 percent, probably closer to 80 percent, of our Child Care are Native as well.

Along with what we think is a strength becomes a challenge. It is really difficult to find qualified, certified teachers in Indian Country, particularly in our rural areas. The law requires that, particularly in Head Start. We do it in Child Care because we think it is the right thing to do. We felt like that makes us have a more quality program. But it gets difficult, particularly early childhood. Our focus is typically on early childhood and elementary education, those are the two groups that we typically look at. But to go a little step further, we require our elementary ed teachers to go ahead and get certification in early childhood, because we want to be a highly qualified program.

So we start looking at things, you mentioned early intervention, Linda, and that is one of the things I want to make sure that we, that is one of the things that is key to us. Behavioral issues have become a bigger and bigger problem, and become bigger all the time. So we have a staff of there people that address our Child Care and Head Start that upon a teacher's referral, they follow up on those and they try to ascertain what the problem is, what things can be done. And then we put a plan of action in place, so we can head off those things before they get along further in public school. Those things are addressed. And we start early.

And by the way, our day care, or what we call our child care, is much more than a babysitting service or a day care service. We start with our infants, teaching them sign language so they can communicate. As they reach one or two years old, we are teaching high reach curriculum. When they reach three and four years, we

go to Frog Street Press. And our Head Start program uses Creative Curriculum and Frog Street Press. So for us, it is all about academics. It is all about social relations, too, but for us, academics is huge.

So what we would like the Committee to know is, there are a lot of us out there doing the right thing for the right reasons. We are trying to prepare our children to be productive, to be successful. That is our intent, that is what we are always looking at, to try to do the best that we can.

In all the classrooms, we are fortunate that we have smart boards. Great teaching tool. They are going to see those things as they progress into public school and on to college. So that is something they are going to be accustomed to.

Some things that we have that perhaps are unique, our Child Care program is also in charge of an after school program, so that our children that are in public school have a place to go. We also do after school for our Head Start. Our Head Start programs are part-day programs. So they finish at 1:00 o'clock, so they transition into our Child Care, so that they will have not just babysitting service, but they will have academics. So for us it is, again, all about preparing our children.

The CHAIRMAN. Time flies when you are having fun. Your five is up, can you wrap up, please?

Mr. WELLS. Absolutely. Basically I do want to share with you, the CDBG grant is one of the things I was supposed to mention, that because of that, we built quality, I invite all of you to come and see our child care facility, it is extraordinary. We built a child care facility with that money, we also built an addition to our Ardmore Center. So we are thankful for the fact that we received those grants. Thank you so much.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Wells follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF DANNY WELLS, EXECUTIVE OFFICER, DIVISION OF EDUCATION, CHICKASAW NATION

Good afternoon, my name is Danny Wells, Executive Officer for the Division of Education, representing the Chickasaw Nation. Thank you Senator Tester and the Committee for allowing me this opportunity to provide "best practices" and "challenges" in regard to education and particularly in Early Childhood Development.

The Chickasaw Nation is a federally recognized tribe located in south-central Oklahoma and encompasses all or parts of 13 counties. The Chickasaw Nation division of education serves approximately 14, 200 students per year from across the United States. The majority of our Chickasaw students in Oklahoma attend public schools. Currently there are an estimated 59,474 students enrolled in the public school districts within the tribe's jurisdiction; 14,801 are Native American.

The Chickasaw Nation constitution provides the Governor with broad discretion to develop and guide the division of education. The division of education is comprised of 210 employees and 5 departments: childcare, head start/early childhood; education services; office of supportive programs and vocational rehabilitation. Our goal at the Chickasaw Nation is to develop programs and services that enhance the overall quality of life of Chickasaw people. Our services and programs are not limited to Chickasaw citizens. We have a wide range of services that benefit other Native Americans and non-Natives as well. Many of our programs rely heavily on outside partners in order to address the needs of our people and local communities. We realize that education provides a stepping stone for people to become productive citizens. For that reason, we embrace the idea of becoming better partners with our local schools to improve the education for all students.

Most people agree that providing our children with a solid foundation is one of the most rewarding investments we can make. We are increasingly learning just

how early in a child's life this education should start if we want to best prepare our children for future successes in all areas of life.

Mounting studies demonstrate that by age six, a child's capacity to learn is largely formed. Seemingly unremarkable childhood play teaches communication, thinking, and problem solving skills. A high level of stimulation with books and talk can mean that a child will possess a 20,000-word vocabulary by age five rather than 5,000 words, the average for children who are not often engaged with language. This early gap has long-term repercussions for a child's cognitive development. The gap between the child who is stimulated at an early age and the one who is not is likely to widen throughout the school years. Staggering evidence supports the case for broad access to early childhood programs:

- Children who participate in quality programs require less special and remedial education, the cost of which is growing twice as fast as regular education, and demonstrate higher achievement in math and reading through age 21;
- As teenagers, these children have lower pregnancy rates, lower delinquency rates, higher test scores, and higher high school graduation rates;
- Adults who received early education suffer lower rates of unemployment and commit fewer crimes.

Early childhood, which is the period in a child's life from birth through age five, is a critical time for children to develop the physical, emotional, social, and cognitive skills they will need for the rest of their lives.

A child's cognitive development during early childhood, which includes building skills such as pre-reading, language, vocabulary, and numeracy, begins from the moment a child is born. Developmental scientists have found that the brain acquires a tremendous amount of information about language in the first year of life even before infants can speak. By the time babies utter or understand their first words, they know which particular sounds their language uses, what sounds can be combined to create words, and the tempo and rhythm of words and phrases.

There is a strong connection between the development a child undergoes early in life and the level of success that the child will experience later in life. For example, infants who are better at distinguishing the building blocks of speech at six months are better at other more complex language skills at two and three years of age and better at acquiring the skills for learning to read at four and five years of age. Not surprisingly, a child's knowledge of the alphabet in kindergarten is one of the most significant predictors of what that child's tenth grade reading ability will be.

When young children are provided an environment rich in language and literacy interactions and full of opportunities to listen to and use language constantly, they can begin to acquire the essential building blocks for learning how to read. A child who enters school without these skills runs a significant risk of starting behind and staying behind.

Intended primarily for preschoolers from low-income families, head start's mission is to promote school readiness to enable each child to develop to his or her fullest potential. Through head start and child care, children receive comprehensive health services, including immunizations, physical and dental exams and treatment, and nutritional services. The head start and child care program engages parents in their children's learning and helps them make progress toward their educational and employment goals. National research is clear: the earlier children are exposed to a rich learning environment, the better their chances of succeeding in school.

Best Practices

The Chickasaw Nation Early Childhood development program consists of the department of child care and the department of head start which serve children from birth to five years of age. Both departments focus on school readiness and preparation and family involvement in school readiness. The staff understands and promotes the importance of preparing children to be ready for school and the significance of parent and family engagement activities which are grounded in positive, ongoing and goal-oriented relationships with families. The Head Start Parent, Family and Community Engagement Framework serves as a guide to prepare our children for school and sustain development and learning gains through third grade. The Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework is used to identify goals and measure progress toward school readiness.

The Chickasaw Nation child care program serves over 400 children and the head start program is funded for 256 children and serves 271 children in a center-based program option. The child care program provides 17 classrooms in two level child care facility and the head start program provides 14 classrooms in four centers. All four head start centers operate as part-day programs and the child care program is a full-day program. Through collaboration with the Chickasaw Nation Child Care

program, child care services are available from 1:00 p.m. until 5:30 p.m. at Ada, Ardmore and Tishomingo. Through collaboration with one public school, classroom instruction has been extended until 3:00 p.m. at Sulphur. The Ada and Ardmore head start centers provide summer school to children and families during the month of June.

The child care Early Development Center is open and available to children year round. In addition to the Early Childhood Development center the child care program provides an after school program to school age children as wells as a summer school age program for students up to 12 years of age.

The Chickasaw Nation Cultural Resources Department provides a Chickasaw language program for all centers. Language preservation specialists visits each classroom throughout the year to offer lessons which includes Chickasaw words for numbers, colors, animals, body parts, commands and traditional greetings. The lessons also include proper pronunciation, stories, poems, activities and songs. Additionally, the Chickasaw language is used every morning in the classroom during circle time. The education component is met through a variety of curricula. A comprehensive approach to each child's individual educational needs is met by using the High Reach Curriculum in the child care facility and the head start uses the Creative Curriculum and the Frog Street Press curriculum. Each child is introduced to a variety of languages including Chickasaw, American Sign Language, Spanish and English. Infants are taught sign language to increase their level of communication. Pictures and repetitious use of words and phrases help the children to grasp the languages. The head start program has participated in the Reading is Fundamental program the past ten years and the child care program utilizes the Dolly Parton book program. Many child and family literacy activities are conducted throughout the year as well as three book distributions. Lending libraries are available at each center to support family literacy.

Each child is screened at enrollment, using the Brigance screening tool to determine the child's beginning level of performance. The Teaching Strategies Gold ongoing assessment is performed with each child to develop the best education program for his/her individual educational needs.

Interactive SMARTBoards have been installed in all classrooms in all centers. Teachers have been assigned laptops on which they plan and program their lessons to present on the SMARTBoards. The teachers use the smart boards daily to engage and motivate the children. Share point is utilized so teachers can share educational websites. Head start and child care teachers have Bachelor degrees in Early Childhood or Elementary Education or are in the process of completing a degree.

The Office of Supportive programs administers the JOM program, the STEP program, Tutoring Reimbursement program, Science, Technology and Math (STM) program and the Chickasaw Honor Club program. The Chickasaw Nation was fortunate to be awarded the State Tribal Education Partnership (STEP) grant which is a consortium with the Cheyenne/Arapaho tribe. The STEP program is designed to assist the Oklahoma State Department of Education in monitoring and reporting on the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) formula grant programs. In addition, the program is working in conjunction with four school systems to provide support and assistance for American Indian students in an effort to help them to be more successful in school. Full-time education specialists provide "wrap around" services for students and their families and are part of the "front line" in targeting students who are in need of assistance. The specialists help facilitate opportunities for gifted and talented students, identify students who are at risk of dropping out of school, provide assistance for those with academic issues and work toward improving parent/guardian relationships with the schools. The specialists also are in a position to help build cultural awareness for the school, students and families.

The Student Tutoring Reimbursement program is a reimbursement program for school age Chickasaw students in grades 1–12 in the areas of math, reading, writing and science. Students must be referred by a teacher or counselor and have a documented IEP or be making a "C" or below to be eligible.

The STM program was implemented to promote and increase interest in the areas of science, technology and math.

- The program is offered to four age groups of FIRST robotics levels: 6–8 years—Junior FIRST LEGO League (Jr. FLL), 9–14 years—FIRST LEGO League (FLL), 15–18 years—FIRST Tech Challenge (FTC) and FIRST Robotics Competition (FRC). The FTC level is designed for students that have no previous experience and the FRC level is for students that have at least one year of experience. These four programs provide students on opportunity to be involved in numerous competitions.

- The Chickasaw Nation Aviation Space Academy (CNASA) program is a week long summer day camp for students in grades 5–12 who have an interest in space aeronautical engineering.
- Space Camp is an all-inclusive week-long summer camp sponsored at the U.S. Space and Rocket Center in Huntsville, Alabama and is available to Chickasaw students 9–18.
- East Central University Robotics Camp is a week-long summer camp sponsored by East Central University. The STM program sponsors 10 Chickasaw students each year and the STM staff assists with the camp.
- The Summer Science School for Day Care is an hour long hands-on learning opportunity each week for youth enrolled in the summer day care program.
- The STM Learning Academy provides short-term classes in the summer for students interested in robotics. Examples of classes offered include: basic electrical and mechanical engineering, CADD design, LABVIEW programming, multimedia and photography.

The Chickasaw Honor Club is an incentive program which is comprised of three components and serves Chickasaw students in grades 2–12. Gift cards are awarded to students who excel in academics, attendance and above and beyond in areas such as academics, athletics, band/music, and citizenship.

The Education Services administers the Higher Education program, the Career Technology program, Native Explorers, Junior Native Explorers, the Summer Science and Medicine Expedition, Hinoshi' Himitta' (New Path) and the Chickasaw Nation Summer Leadership Academy.

- The Native Explorers program provides educational programs and promotes partnerships that increases the number of Native Americans in science and math. The main goal is to promote and introduce STEM fields in order to increase the number of Native American students enrolled in STEM majors. The Native Explorers program partners with scientists and educators at the OSU-Center for Health Sciences in Tulsa, OK; the Sam Noble Museum of Natural History in Norman, OK and the Chickasaw Nation in an effort to broaden its range of impact and further increase the number of Native Americans who study the sciences and/or medicine.
- The Junior Native Explorers offers opportunities for students to participate in activities which include earth science, natural science and biomedical science and is open to Chickasaw students between the ages of 6–18.
- The Summer Science and Medicine Expedition provides the opportunities for five college students to participate in a two week expedition which includes an archeological dig.
- The Hinoshi' Himitta" (New Path) is a program designed to help Chickasaw junior and senior high school students transition into post-secondary education programs. The focus of this program is to encourage first generation students to attend post-secondary education.
- The Chickasaw Summer Leadership Academy is a two week academy in partnership with Southeastern State University. The purpose of this academy is to identify first generation students and provide a college experience as they live on campus during each week and attend classes designed to assist them with transition into post-secondary education.

Acknowledgments

The Chickasaw Nation appreciates being a recipient of some of the Indian Community Development Block grants (ICDBG) the past few years. These grants have enabled us to build a phenomenal Early Childhood Development center, an STM building to house our science, technology and math efforts, a Sick Child Care center to serve mildly ill children and an expansion at one of our head start centers which enabled us to add two classrooms and a cafeteria. We are also about to begin construction on a new Early Childhood Development center in Ardmore, OK thanks to being awarded another ICDBG.

Challenges

Johnson O'Malley

The Chickasaw Nation serves as a contractor for the Johnson O'Malley (JOM) program for 52 public schools within the Chickasaw Nation boundaries. This funding provides supplemental educational opportunities for approximately 8,200 Native American students in our area assisting with school supplies, educational materials,

tutoring and cultural education. Each school has a JOM coordinator and parent committee that oversees the use of the funds.

In 1994 the Johnson O'Malley student count was frozen and the funding has not increased since 1995. Currently over 90 percent of Native American students are in public schools yet the funding has remained the same, resulting in fewer services for the students. Additionally when the student count was frozen, the JOM funds were placed under the Tribal Priority Allocation (TPA) category of funding and the JOM office at the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) was closed. There is no contact person for the JOM program to maintain and administer the program. There has also been a move by the Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) to eliminate the JOM program so they can use the funds for other uses. The BIE's priority is students located within BIE funded schools. As mentioned earlier, most Native American students attend public schools. The Native students in public schools do not have a voice in the BIE or BIA to advocate for their academic success. The best advocate for Native students is the tribes.

Tribal Interaction with Schools

Tribal interaction with schools could be improved by allowing Tribal Education Agencies (TEA) access to students and educational data of students enrolled in public schools within the tribal boundaries. These TEAs could assign representatives to the schools to have direct contact with the students and could assist them with tutoring and help address attendance issues with an emphasis on access to tribal programs. Connecting students and families to tribal programs gives much needed access to family counseling, behavioral health professionals, mentoring programs, cultural and language programs to name a few. There are too many issues in public schools to expect the teachers or administrative staff to be aware of tribal programs, which results in tribal students being disconnected to services that could help them perform better academically and socially. Tribal representatives should have access to student records (attendance, grades, etc.) so that tribes can become partners with the schools to improve the tribal student's education or prevent at-risk students from failing or dropping out of school.

The curricula for public schools are determined by committees appointed at the district and state level. Unfortunately, in states with populations of Native American students, there are times when schools include offensive material into curricula without being aware of the nature of the offense. For example, in Oklahoma, public schools often conduct activities portraying the "Oklahoma Land Run" without realizing the negative connotation of the act to Native American students. Most teachers and administrators are not aware of the negative impact they have on the students and their families. There are better ways to study historical periods of statehood or other events, and with a tribal representative on the curricula committee, it could be accomplished in a manner that is not offensive.

Accountability

Schools could be held more accountable for the education of Native American students if funding for Indian Education programs such Title VII and Impact Aid were administered by the Tribal Education Agencies in the area. This could be done in a manner similar to the JOM contracts. Currently, schools are only required to have public hearings or oversight committees appointed by the school administration. Tribes are often not given adequate notification for the hearings and may not be asked to participate at all. As a result the funds are often spent for educational services for the entire school population, not the Native American students for which the funds are allocated. If the TEA had oversight, it could ensure proper expenditures. For years tribes have been asking local schools how the Title VII and Impact Aid funds are spent. Schools are reluctant to share the information with the tribes but when they do answer their typical response is "the funds go into one pool and cannot be tracked;" they cannot tell us specifically if the funds were spent on Native students. Realistically we know the funds are federal dollars and must be reported to the funding agency so there is some type of reporting mechanism involved.

Culture and Native Language

Over the past decades, tribes have made great advances in capturing and preserving their culture, history and languages. Culture, history and language make us who we are and help us to understand our struggles and accomplishments. It is unfortunate that the public school textbooks have not preserved this information or portrayed accurate Native American history to students. History and culture validates people's existence. Native students look to their history and culture to validate who they are and why they are here. Working with public schools, tribes can provide accurate and relevant history and culture so all students can benefit from the

information and presentation. Tribes can be a resource for language, cultural or history curricula, and it can be designed so that it will abide by State's Common CORE Standards.

The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act requires a teacher be considered "highly qualified" in order to teach a language for school credit. Most fluent tribal speakers are elders and do not have the degree or certification to become "highly qualified." Those same speakers are being lost at an alarming rate due to their age. Native languages are highly endangered and action needs to be taken before they are lost. The tribes are the best judge to say who is an expert speaker of their language. NCLB should include language which allows tribes to certify their language speakers according to standards the tribe determines. Additionally, Native language should be certified as a world language credit so that it is accredited for purposes of graduation. Currently, Native language is counted as electives due to the challenges of teacher certification.

In conclusion, we applaud the efforts of this committee to address issues related to Native students and education. Working together, we believe the impact of this effort will not only benefit Native American students but will also positively impact their families, communities, and all students in public schools!

The CHAIRMAN. I appreciate your testimony. There will be some questions. Thank you, Mr. Wells.

Ms. Fabre?

STATEMENT OF BARBARA FABRE, CHAIRWOMAN, NATIONAL INDIAN CHILD CARE ASSOCIATION; DIRECTOR, CHILD CARE/ EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAM, WHITE EARTH NATION

Ms. FABRE. Mr. Chairman, Vice Chair and members of the Committee, my name is Barb Fabre, and I am a tribal member from the White Earth Nation Anishinaabe Tribe. I have worked for the tribe for over 20 years and with CCDBG for the last 20 years. As you are aware, the early years in a child's life makes the most difference in the future and defines what kind of human being they will become and what kind of citizen they will be. These early years are especially important with children from low income communities and tribal communities in particular.

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce you to Hayden. Hayden is a 10-month old who is in our child care learning center. Hayden's dad is a maintenance worker and his mom recently enrolled in college. Their annual income is $26,000. They can't afford their own home, so they are living with their relatives. The child care bill alone for Hayden is $4,200 per year. But thanks to the tribal setaside for CCDBG, their child care cost is supplemented with child care assistance, and now Hayden's dad has been able to also enroll in college while he still works.

Young children from different socioeconomic groups come to school with dramatically different vocabularies. Low income children enter kindergarten with a 3,000 word vocabulary. But children from middle class families enter with a 20,000 word vocabulary. The achievement gap starts there, especially for our Native children. As you know, tribal communities are one of those socioeconomic groups.

Preparing for my visit here today, I heard from tribal communities all over Indian Country. They told me about their successes, the early intervention, school readiness initiatives they are doing, the language and vocabulary, parent conferences, social-emotional skill building. And to Senator Heitkamp's comment, we are dealing with behaviors in child care. We have limited resources, we don't have staff, we don't have coordinators, health coordinators. Chil-

dren who have adverse experiences of prolonged toxic stress associated with poverty, child abuse and serious neglect, parental substance abuse, neighborhood violence or maternal depression also need interventions to build the foundational skills necessary to reach their full potential.

As I heard from the tribes, I also heard about their struggles. They have had to downsize staff, long waiting lists, and as you will read in my testimony, many more tribes endure long waiting lists. The lack of child care facilities, and like Mr. Wells, child care is not babysitting. Tribal child care is definitely not babysitting. In any given community, Head Start serves about one-third of the community's children. About another third is in some form of child care, while another third is not in anything.

So we take that very seriously. We go out into the community and we provide early childhood services. Our tribal child care has recently added early childhood to our name, because we are the early childhood program for our community. We are doing parent engagement, parent training, community training.

As you will read in my testimony, you will see that over the last 17 years, approximately 25 new CCDBG grantees, which is a good thing. Right now there are 260 grantees. It is good that they are getting CCDBG, but that just also means that the pie is not getting any bigger, we are just slicing it into smaller and smaller sections. So that is the struggle with tribal CCDF in Indian Country. We are faced with a lot of issues, but we are also faced with funding extremes.

While the concern is avoiding duplication, it really comes back to lack of funding and resources. We too believe in a continuum of learning from birth on up. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Fabre follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF BARBARA FABRE, CHAIRWOMAN, NATIONAL INDIAN CHILD CARE ASSOCIATION; DIRECTOR, CHILD CARE/EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAM, WHITE EARTH NATION

Mr. Chairman, members of the Committee, I am Barbara Fabre, a tribal member from the White Earth Nation in Minnesota, the largest of 11 tribes in Minnesota. I am the Director of White Earth Child Care/Early Childhood Program and Chairwoman of the National Indian Child Care Association, that is representative of tribal child care programs throughout Indian Country. It is an honor to be here today and I am proud to be here to represent tribal child care. I applaud the Committee on Indian Affairs for its decision to include tribal child care in the oversight hearing on early childhood development.

The Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) Act of 1990, (CCDBG Final Rule 45CFR 98 and 99, published August 1992), also known as the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF), is to increase the availability, affordability and quality of child care services for children (families and communities). This federal funding is for States, Territories, Indian Tribes, and tribal organizations in order to: (1) provide low-income families with the financial resources to find and afford quality child care for their children; (2) enhance the quality and increase the supply of child care for all families, including those who receive no direct assistance under the CCDF; (3) provide parents with a broad range of option in addressing their child care needs; (4) strengthen the role of the family; (5) improve the quality of, and coordination among, child care programs and early childhood development programs; and (6) increase the availability of early childhood development and before-and-after school care services. While a 1994 mandate, reaffirms a government-to-government relationship between Tribes and the Federal Government and directing agencies to design solutions and tailor Federal programs, in appropriate circumstances, to address specific or unique needs of tribal communities, tribal child care programs are designed locally and able to meet the unique needs of tribal communities.

The National Indian Child Care Association is the recognized representative body of the Tribal Child Care and Development Block Grant grantees. The Association was developed in 1993 to provide information, support, coordination, and advocacy for Tribal child care. Two hundred sixty Tribes and Tribal organizations received Child Care and Development Block Grant in FY 2013 (259 Tribes and Tribal organizations (including 20 consortia), encompassing approximately 520 Federally-Recognized Tribes; and 1 Native Hawaiian grantee. (35 Tribes have consolidated their CCDF funding with employment, training and related services into a P.L. 102–477 Plan. There were 30,598 children serviced by Tribal CCDF in FY 2011 (this number reflects only the number of children who received CCDBG child care assistance (subsidy), and does not take into consideration the thousands of children being served in tribally licensed centers or tribally licensed child care providers and other quality initiatives/services that Tribal child care programs do beyond the ACF700 Report aggregate data form). The Child Care and Development Block Grant is the single largest program authorized under the Personal Responsibilities and Work Opportunities Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) affecting Tribal governments. Participation in the Child Care and Development Block Grant allows Tribal governments and organizations the opportunity to design, implement, and support programs which are beneficial to the unique needs of our Tribal citizens. The mission of National Indian Child Care Association is to unify tribes and tribal organizations to promote high quality culturally relevant child care and development. National Indian Child Care Association provides leadership, support, and communication on behalf of Native America, Alaska Native and Native Hawaiians children, families, and communities. NICCA also recommends that any language regarding CCDBG properly include Native Hawaiians and these proposed technical corrections would not have Native Hawaiian compete with American Indians or Alaska Natives for limited funding. Instead, these technical corrections address the CCDBG bill's requirements that states serve all Native populations and coordinate with Native organizations; and apply strong child care standards to all Native child care organizations.

The number of Tribal child care programs receiving funding through the Child Care and Development Block Grant has increased. The amount of funding that Tribes and tribal organizations receive each year is contingent upon the number of Tribes and tribal organizations participating and the number of children in each Tribe or service area. The per child amount of funding for Tribes has decreased from $164.00 per child in 2002 to $140.00 per child in 2011. That is less than the per child rate that was received by Tribes and tribal organizations in 2001. The percent of set aside for Tribes and tribal organizations is currently "up to two percent at the discretion of the Secretary." Currently, tribal set aside is at the maximum we can receive under current law, which has been the same since 1996, although services rendered by Tribal child care programs have significantly increased, cost of living (inflation), the demand for child care (assistance and capacity), and more tribes receiving CCDBG funding has been a hardship for Tribal child care programs throughout Indian Country.

While Tribal child care has been diligently providing quality child care to parts of the country that are typically rural, high poverty areas, funding to maintain that quality and expand services remains a huge barrier. As you are aware, the CCDBG has not been reauthorized for the past 17 years, and with additional tribes receiving CCDBG funding, the two percent has been rationed to even more tribes. While there is hope of a reauthorization of CCDBG, Tribal child care programs will continue to lose ground if the tribal set aside is not increased to five percent. Due to the inadequate investment in child care, tribes are constantly having to decide on what is more important, serving more eligible children or improving quality.

As a tribal CCDBG Tribal Administrator since 1993, I have first-hand experience of implementing CCDBG services and know the many facets of child care licensing, child care assistance, training, quality rating, school readiness, parent engagement, economic development and early learning. The White Earth Child Care Program was created in 1993 when the Tribe received CCDBG funding, which has allowed us to provide child care assistance, develop our own tribal licensing standards, which in some areas, exceeds the State's licensing standards for family/group child care, provide quality improvement grants to providers and centers to meet licensing requirements or improvement, School-Age Child Care grants, monthly monitoring visits, early childhood curriculum/child development training, and manage two child care centers (one is funded by CCDBG & parent fees and other is funded by the Tribe & parent fees). We also provide outreach and resources to relative caregivers who provide child care (unlicensed), and provide (free) community trainings on child development, parenting and school readiness. While we are one of the larger Tribal child care program, there are as many high quality smaller Tribal programs, that are struggling to maintain services. The Colusa Indian Community in Colusa, CA

for example, receives $26,000, and serves 70 children, could only subsidize approximately 4 children per year based on our current grant award per year, which would only cover tuition. The Colusa Center has made tremendous efforts to meet the highest quality in early learning and development possible and state they are fortunate that the Tribe believes in investing in early care and education. They would turn children away more than accept them in our care if the Tribe didn't invest funding. They also struggle to meet the needs of their children enrolled who have special needs. Services are often limited to one 30 minute session per week, leaving their staff to care for children on a one on one basis, leaving a higher ratio for other staff. They cannot afford to pay for more staff. This is a constant balance and struggle, as well as being able to afford specialized training and/or staff who have the training and education.

In 2010, White Earth Reservation was selected as one of four Transformation Zones under Minnesota's Race to the Top/Early Learning Challenge Grant, which allows us to administer the Early Learning Scholarship Program, to target children/families who are not in any kind of early learning program and provide direct services to children by allowing parents the opportunity to choose the best quality rated early learning program (parent directed scholarship program) such as child care, head start or school-based preschool, that fits their need. Children are then placed in a quality Parent Aware rated early learning program that will help develop a strong foundation of learning. In order to help families support healthy brain development, parents are required to attend a minimum of 4 hours of child development training per year (parents, providers and community members are invited to all trainings our Program provides) and are assigned a Parent Mentor that provides early literacy and language development resources on a monthly basis. The collaboration with the State of Minnesota is to ensure quality early childhood access to children who would not otherwise be in an early childhood setting prior to entering kindergarten, was made possible because, of our established tribal CCDBG program, as a vehicle for reaching hundreds of Indian families and rural communities. While this is unique to tribes in Minnesota, not all Tribes share this success of working with the State government and much needs to be done to help encourage States to reach out and work with their Tribal CCDBG partners. Minnesota Governor Mark Dayton and the 2013 Legislature approved $40 million in scholarships for families to access high quality, Parent Aware-rated early learning programs this biennium, along with statewide full-day kindergarten that will begin in 2014. These initiatives are expected to have a positive impact on kindergarten readiness and early learning success in years to come. Tribal child care programs take 'school readiness' very seriously and work with children in our tribal child care programs to help build skills, knowledge, behaviors and accomplishments that children should know and be able to do as they enter kindergarten in the following areas of child development: physical development; the arts; personal and social development; language and literacy; and mathematical thinking.

Prior to receiving CCDBG funding, the White Earth Reservation had only 8 state-licensed child care homes within a 1300 square mile radius. With 9 rural communities averaging 150 to 1,000 people in each community (10,000 individuals live within the reservation boundaries), there simply was not enough child care. With CCDBG funding, the Tribe developed its own licensing process and standards, there are 7 state-licensed child care homes and 14 tribally licensed child care homes and 2 tribally licensed centers. Of the 16 tribally licensed child care sites, 14 are Parent Aware rated (MN's quality rating system), with 5 rated 4–Star, 4 rated 3–Star, 1 rated 1–Star and 4 in the process who will be 3–Star. Our Program also worked with 3 state licensed providers within the reservation boundaries who serve our Native children, to help them receive a 4, 3 and 2 Star rating. While the numbers of licensed child care sites have doubled, there are still long waiting lists at these licensed child care sites AND waiting lists at both county and tribal child care assistance programs, to help low-income families pay for child care costs.

Tribes across Indian Country have shared their struggles at their current funding, in Washington, the Tulalip Tribe have 16 on their waiting list. In Muscogee Creek Nation, they have seven tribal child care centers, a child care assistance program, Resource & Referral and tribal licensing. They serve 250 children and have 75 children on their waiting list. The Shoshone Bannock Tribes in Idaho has 81 children on their waiting list in their Child Care Center. While a successful program, they still lack space and have to cut their budgets dramatically over the years with their Centers and trying not to cut child care assistance program. With the ever increasing food costs and utility expenses, they are experiencing the decision many Tribal child care programs are faced with having to use their limited CCDBG funds for quality or quantity. Muscogee Creek Nation in OK, stated that 'by having more tribal child care programs or expanding the current centers, they could serve more trib-

al families and more jobs can be offered to tribal members.' Due to the number of tribal participants, the demand for child care in Indian communities, and fluctuation in tribal funding, Tribes have experienced a significant decrease in the ability to provide quality services in Indian Country. This is particularly detrimental to existing programs, which must reduce the level of child care services to Indian families from year to year.

According to the Annie E. Casey Foundation, American Indian children are the only group that collectively lost ground since 2000 on several well-being indicators. Child poverty continues to rise at a faster rate than for any other ethnic group in the United States. Additionally, the child death rate for children aged 1–14 has decreased by 9 percent for non-Indian children but has increased by 15 percent for American Indian children. Indian Country has a poverty rate of more than 31 percent, the highest poverty rate of any ethnic group in the United States, nearly three times the national average. Reservations are experiencing unemployment rates of 50 percent, almost 10 times more than the national average. Native children are the most at-risk population in the United States, confronting serious disparities.

American Indian, Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian children need quality child care settings to improve lifelong outcomes. Increased risk factors such as poverty, low birth weight, and low educational attainment of mothers contribute to the need for investment in quality child care in Indian country. There are many challenges faced by American Indian, Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian children, Tribal child care is a vehicle for intervention and support of quality care and cultural strengths. The Federal Government must take into account the needs by tribal communities, which must be determined by tribal communities, and served by tribal programs in order to make meaningful changes to practices. Reduced funding and resources will continue to undermine tribal culture and American Indian, Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian children's development. Mayor Charlotte Brower, North Slope Borough, Alaska stated ". . . Child Care is the number one issue for all working parents. In order to keep full time job, working parents, need this service. I support sustainable, quality and affordable child care services and will support working parents."

The flexibility of CCDBG funding, allows Tribal child care programs to uniquely braid and immerse, culture and Native language teachings throughout their programming and classrooms. There continues to be emerging evidence that dual language early childhood education programs have solid potential to help children prepare for school, and helps the Tribe revitalize and maintain their language. If you were to visit Tribal child care classrooms around the country, you would see parent engagement, language immersion, regalia making, dance and drum. For children, parents and staff, making the regalia helps understand its meaning and helps provide an opportunity to re-engage with our culture from which we have become disconnected.

While tribal child care looks slightly different in every community, the priority is the same, to provide high quality child care to tribal communities which are typically the highest poverty areas in the state. Tribal child care programs vary from offering center-based services, child care assistance, child care licensing, monitoring, quality improvement and health/safety grants, professional development, afterschool programs and working with partners such as head start, employment agencies and schools to ensure quality and a continuum of services, as no one program or school can serve all the communities children.

Tribal grantees participating in the CCDBG have increased from 226 in 1994 to 258 in 2010; however, all federally recognized Tribes are eligible to participate and some Tribes also provide services for descendants of tribal members, who may not have the blood quantum to be enrolled. Current Head Start legislation authorizes a minimum of 4 percent set aside for Indian Head Start programs. With inflation at approximately 3 percent per year, Tribes have experienced a significant decrease in the ability to provide services in Indian Country. This is particularly detrimental to existing programs, which must reduce funding of all child care services to Indian families. This greatly affects the children of families that are working to transition off of public assistance programs through work and educational opportunities.

No Access for Additional Funding for Tribal Child Care

Although demands on Tribal resources have increased, Tribes do not have access to additional funding. States have a tax base that generates funds for necessary programs, and the myth that if Tribes have a casino, they are wealthy, when in fact, casino revenues are generally limited (with the exception of a few) and are put back into helping their tribal communities. States also have access to additional federal funds that tribes do not have access to, because of no tribal set-aside or tribal language included in new or existing initiatives. Child Care Development Block Grant

funds are the only funds for Tribal child care. Native American, Alaska Natives and Native Hawaiian parents must have access to high quality early learning experiences for their children. Indian children, who are in quality early learning environments at home, in care with family or friends, or in more formal early childhood settings, experience positive outcomes later in life, as proven through the extensive research shows that investing in early childhood has a return investment.

According to a report, "one of the most productive investments that is rarely viewed as economic development is early childhood development (ECD). Several longitudinal ECD studies that are based on a relatively small number of at-risk children from low-income families, demonstrate that the potential return is extraordinary. In a previous essay, we found that, based on these studies, the potential annual return from focused, high-quality ECD programs might be as high as 16 percent (inflation adjusted), of which the annual public return is 12 percent (inflation adjusted)," (Rolnick & Grunewald, 2006).

When it comes to economic development, tribal child care is one of the key important components of economic development planning in tribal communities, next to jobs and housing. Jobs cannot be created without the support of child care services. Tribal child care is a vital service in Tribal communities to insure parents have the ability to maintain education and employment for self-sufficiency and to help our tribal families go off or stay off the State's TANF rolls.

In closing, Tribal child care is not babysitting, it is a vital services to tribal communities and is often the glue to collaboration between preschool programs, school districts, parents and economic development. Tribal child care programs are help their State by being able to offer comprehensive child care/early childhood services to the most vulnerable communities in the State—tribal communities, and who better to serve tribal communities and tribal families but Tribal programs. Child care teachers/providers who are supported and monitored by Tribal CCDBG programs are proud of the services they offer; early childhood screenings, assessments, authentic observations, social and emotional skill building, culture/language, early interventions for children with special needs and parent conferences, that reinforce parent engagement and a continuum of foundational learning skills from home to child care, to head start on through school. While there are many gaps, probably the biggest one is funding, when it comes to what our Congress can do for tribal child care, is to help Tribal Child Care be fully funded by providing the 5 percent increase in the CCDBG tribal set aside.

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The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Barb. Thank you for your testimony. Ms. Power, you may proceed.

STATEMENT OF JACQUELYN POWER, SUPERINTENDENT/ PRINCIPAL, BLACKWATER COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Ms. POWER. Chairman Tester and Senator Heitkamp, my name is Jacquelyn Power, and I have been the superintendent and prin-

cipal at Blackwater Community School for the past 20 years. Blackwater is an early childhood through grade 2 Bureau of Indian Education grant school. Thank you for inviting me to participate in this panel and talk about the FACE program.

Our school has participated in the Family and Child Education program for the past 21 years. We have been recognized twice by the BIE for quality implementation of this program and our preschool teacher, Ms. Paul, has been recognized by the National Center for Families Learning as the Toyota Teacher of the Year.

FACE has directly impacted the quality of our school. As a result, Blackwater has made AYP since the beginning of the No Child Left Behind legislation. FACE is the most significant education initiative in the BIE's history.

The FACE program was designed to prepare preschool children to enter kindergarten ready to learn. FACE is the only evidence-based program in the BIE evaluated for the past 23 years by Research and Training associates.

The goals of the FACE program are to support parents and guardians in their role as their child's first and most influential teacher, strengthen family, school, and community connections, increase parent participation in their child's learning and expectations for academic achievement, support and celebrate the unique cultural and linguistic diversity of each American Indian community, and to promote lifelong learning.

During the 23-year history of FACE, the program has gradually increased to five pilot sites to 43 sites throughout the Nation, serving approximately 41,000 adults and children. It is a comprehensive program consisting of home visits, parent education, job training, pre-school and parent and child time, when parents and children interact in a structured learning environment.

To put a face to this date is important. One student that I have known since she was in elementary school stands out in so many ways. She had a learning disability in elementary school. However, as she entered a feeder school, she became discouraged and felt disconnected from school. In spite of her parents' best efforts, she dropped out of high school.

Over the next few years, she became a mother of five children with little hope for the future. For her, the only ray of hope was the FACE program. She spent four long, hard years working to prepare for the GED and in December of 2013 she passed. So many times she expressed her interest in working with special needs children, because of her personal life and challenges. Today this student is working for Blackwater as a classroom aide for a special needs child. Without FACE, her dreams would never have been realized, and her children's future would have been compromised.

When FACE started, two national models were selected for implementation. The Parents as Teachers Home Visiting Model was selected based on the curriculum's focus on increasing parent involvement in the child's development, plus early detection and referral based on developmental needs. The National Center for Families Learning was selected as the center-based model that included both pre-school and the adult education component that continued the role of parents as integral to the success of their child in school.

Both of these models focused on parent engagement which is critical to a child's success in school.

Some of the outcomes for the Home Based program show nearly 100 percent of children from tribal families receiving this service enroll in preschool. Participating families have more than 50 books in their homes, which is significant, because most Native families only have 10 books.

The results of the center-based program for preschool and the adult education program have consistently shown when children attend FACE regularly, they exceed the national average in English language development and vocabulary. FACE preschool supports school readiness with increased parent involvement, including reading out loud to their children, more literacy materials in their home, and particularly children with special needs with early intervention score at the national average.

Throughout the history of FACE, approximately 5,250 adults gained employment during their FACE participation. Finally, the FACE program supports the preservation of Native languages. For Gila River this is critical because the O'Odham language is almost extinct. Within FACE, the parents and preschool children are using the computer to develop O'Odham-English books that they share at home and are in our school library.

In closing, I wish to emphasize the need to continue the four-component model of FACE that includes technical assistance from our two national partners. The FACE model recognizes that education begins at birth, and parents are the first and most important teacher of their child. Today, many parents in FACE programs are here with me today to ask and thank Congress for supporting the FACE program and helping to expand it to all FACE sites within the United States.

And thank you for this opportunity, and I would be glad to answer any questions.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Power follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF JACQUELYN POWER, SUPERINTENDENT/PRINCIPAL, BLACKWATER COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Chairman Tester, Vice Chairman Barrasso and members of the Committee my name is Jacquelyn Power and I have been the Superintendent/Principal at the Blackwater Community School for the past twenty years. Blackwater Community School is an early childhood through grade two Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) grant school. Thank you for inviting us to participate in this important hearing on early childhood education and to comment specifically on the impacts of the FACE program.

Our school has participated in the Family and Child Education program for the past twenty-one years. We have been recognized twice by the BIE for quality implementation of this program and our pre-school teacher, Ms. Gwendolyn Paul, has been recognized by the National Center for Families Learning as the Toyota Teacher of the Year.

The FACE program in my opinion is the most significant education initiative in the Bureau of Indian Education's (BIE) history. In the Bureau of Indian Education too often programs come and go, many without positive results. However FACE has continued because it is based on the latest research and best practices and has long term data to demonstrate its success. FACE has directly impacted the quality of our school with the result that our school has made AYP since the beginning of the No Child Left Behind legislation.

The FACE program was implemented to address the need to prepare children for school as the majority of children enrolling in BIE schools were not prepared for kindergarten. It was also started due to the lack of resources, financial and facili-

ties, to expand the Head Start Program. This situation still exists in many locations throughout Indian country. As an example, in our school's attendance area we do not have one Head Start Program. If it were not for FACE, children would not have access to a quality pre-natal through early childhood program prior to entering kindergarten at Blackwater Community School.

FACE is the only evidence-based program in the BIE, having been evaluated for the past twenty-three years by an outside evaluator.

Beginning in 1990, based on an extensive tribal consultation process, FACE was implemented at six sites, serving almost 500 participants. The FACE program primarily serves families with children prenatal to 5 years of age by providing parenting education services, adult education or early childhood services. The goals of the FACE program are to:

- Support parents/primary caregivers in their role as their child's first and most influential teacher.
- Strengthen family-school-community connections.
- Increase parent participation in their child's learning and expectations for academic achievement.
- Support and celebrate the unique cultural and linguistic diversity of each American Indian community served by the program.
- Promote lifelong learning.

During the 23-year history of FACE, the program has gradually increased to 43 sites and has served approximately 41,000 adults and children. The design of the program since has been to support children and their families from birth through age four. It is a comprehensive program consisting of home visiting, parent education to increase parents' formal education levels to prepare them for employment, pre-school for three and four year old children, and parent and child time, when parents and children interact in a structured learning environment. It is important to note that this comprehensive approach is critical as each component by itself is not sufficient to improve school readiness on its own.

Two home visiting parent educators are usually employed at each site and are required to serve 12 families weekly or 24 families bi-weekly, reaching a maximum of 48 families served at a site at any point in time. These trained parent educators work with families in their own homes, to help parents make age and developmentally appropriate choices regarding the early literacy activities, healthcare, and development of their children. FACE preschools can serve a maximum of 20 children and 15 parents in the adult education component.

When FACE started, two national models were selected for implementation. The Parents as Teachers Home Visiting Model was selected based on their curriculum's focus on increasing parent involvement in their child's development and learning; early detection of developmental delays; and helping support parents prepare their child for school. The National Center for Families Learning was selected as the center based model that contained both a pre-school and adult education component that continued the role of parents as integral to the success of their child in school. Both of these models focused on parent engagement that research show is critical to a child's success in school. Since FACE started each site has received continued technical assistance and professional development from these two nationally recognized organizations. Their commitment to quality training and support make it possible for FACE to produce positive outcomes year after year.

Some of the outcomes for the Home Based program show:

- Almost 100 percent of children from tribal families receiving home based parent education services go on to attend preschool, and they attend for a longer period.
- 81 percent of parents report reading to their children almost daily.
- Participating families had more than 50 books on average in their homes compared to the majority of Native American homes with less than ten books that are developmentally appropriate.
- 87 percent of FACE children in the PAT home based component received a screening (developmental, hearing, vision, dental or health), which is more than double the percentage of children screened when the data was first reported in 1997.
- 83 percent of 19–35 month old children in the FACE program were current with their immunizations (compared to the 76 percent national average.)

The results of the Center Based program, the pre-school and adult education components, have consistently shown:

- Children who attend FACE preschool enter below the national percentile rank, but leave on a level playing field with children nationally.
- Due to early intervention, FACE children are half as likely to need special education services at kindergarten entry.
- After one year of FACE preschool, children with special needs score near the national average, lowering the need for costly, long-term special education.
- Indian children leave BIE FACE with significant and meaningful gains in expressive language development.
- When children attend FACE regularly they exceed the national average in English language development and vocabulary.
- That FACE preschool supports school readiness with increased parent involvement, more literacy materials at home, and more reading aloud.
- Throughout the history of FACE, approximately 5,250 adults gained employment during their FACE participation.
- Most parents indicated that FACE helped them a lot in increasing the amount of time they spend with their child (85 percent), in becoming more involved in their child's education (82 percent), in increasing their understanding of child development (81 percent), in becoming a better parent (80 percent), in encouraging their child's interest in reading (76 percent), and in increasing their ability to speak up for their child (73 percent).

Like these national results, in my 20 years at the school I have seen first hand the impact of this program in our community and in our families. Blackwater's FACE program serves an average of 95 adult and children per year in the home based and center based programs. This calculates to 1995 participants in the 21 years of operation at the school.

Since 1993, 65 adults completed their GED diploma, 77 adults have been inducted into the National Adult Education Honor Society, 15 adults received college scholarships, and one parent now sits on the school board. In fact, a typical class is composed of parents who dropped out of high school and others who enroll in college classes for the first time. Even more important is the parents' commitment to reconnecting to education for themselves and their child in the FACE program.

To put a face to this data is critical to this discussion on Early Childhood Education. One student that I have known since she was in elementary school stands out in so many ways. She had a learning disability in elementary school. However, as she entered a feeder school she became discouraged and felt isolated and disconnected to school. In spite of her parents best efforts she dropped out of high school. It wasn't long after that this student became a teenage mother. Over the next few years, she became a mother of five children with little hope for a future. For her, the only ray of hope was the FACE program. She spent four long years of hard work preparing for the GED and in December 2013 she passed. On so many occasions we would talk about her future and what she hoped to accomplish. So many times she expressed her interest in working with special needs children because of her personal life and challenges. Today, this student is working at Blackwater as a classroom aide to a special needs child. Without FACE, her dreams would have never been realized and her future and that of her children would be compromised.

Historically, the majority of parents who enroll in FACE with their children are mothers; however, over the years I have seen more fathers attend school with their children. One father that stands out entered FACE without a high school diploma and was a father of five children. In fact, both he and his wife shared the duty to attend the FACE program with one of their children over the years. Both of them completed their GEDs. His wife is in college and working for Gila River. The father, not only completed his GED, but also received the prestigious Friedlander Award in adult education for his accomplishments in FACE. Besides working to complete his GED, he started his own business as a DJ, which is highly successful. He also works full time for Blackwater Community School in food service and facilities. All of their children have thrived in school and their futures will be secured because of the commitment their parents made to FACE.

The Home based program is equally successful and its focus on early screening for disabilities is a hallmark of this component. As a result of these early interventions, I have seen a reduction in referrals to special education. In fact, the school's average special education population has dropped from a high of over 20 percent to an average of 10 percent.

Equally important is the success the FACE children demonstrate when they enter kindergarten. These children are prepared to learn and demonstrate consistent proficiency in reading and math. Since the beginning of NCLB the school has always

made AYP. Moreover, in 2013 Blackwater was awarded a B letter grade by the Arizona Department of Education for its performance on the Stanford 10 test.

Finally, the FACE program supports the preservation of Native languages. For Gila River this is critical because the O'Odham language is almost extinct. Within FACE, the parents and preschool children are using the computer to develop O'Odham/English web-based books that are then added to the school library and taken home to practice the language. Both the parents and children are learning their Native language at school as well as their culture. This is critical to the survival of the rich legacy of this tribe and the FACE program provides the foundation for this effort. The commitment to the preservation of the language continues in the K–2 program as well.

In closing I wish to again emphasize the need to continue FACE as the four-component model as it was originally designed to include the provision of technical assistance from the two nationally recognized models. Families need and require a comprehensive literacy program that recognizes education begins at birth, as parents are their first and most important teachers. It is a proven model based on twenty-three years of data. I am providing for the record the Executive Summary from Program Year 2012 for your information as well as some preliminary Program Year 2013 data that will be released in the near future that shows current outcomes similar to those in the previous year. We thank Congress for its continued support of this program that is so important to successful education achievement of Indian children and urge Congress to expand this model to all BIE schools.

I very much appreciate this opportunity to speak on behalf of this program and to have the opportunity to speak with you today. I would be happy to address your questions.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Ms. Power. Thank you for your stories of success.

Dr. Costello, you may proceed.

STATEMENT OF E. JANE COSTELLO, PROFESSOR, DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHIATRY AND BEHAVIORAL MEDICINE; ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR FOR RESEARCH, CENTER FOR CHILD AND FAMILY POLICY, DUKE UNIVERSITY

Ms. COSTELLO. Chairman Tester and members of the Committee, thank you for this opportunity to testify today. I am a psychiatric epidemiologist, and would be glad to explain that.

[Laughter.]

Ms. COSTELLO. I am most grateful for your continued support of basic science, funded in this case through the National Institute of Mental Health, National Institute on Drug Abuse. However, the views that I express here are not necessarily those of the NIH or of Duke University. They are my own.

The research that I want to present to you today carries, I think, a very clear message: we pay now or we pay later. Let me explain. Our tax dollars can support poor families while their children are growing and developing, or we can pay the higher cost of obesity, alcohol and drug abuse, crime, and loss of economic productivity down the road. I am not just saying this, let me tell you about the data.

For 20 years, we at Duke have studied the same group of 1,400 people living in the mountains of western North Carolina, of whom 350 are American Indians from the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians. The children whom we began to study in the 1990s, have now grown into their 30s and we are able to look at the long-term effects of investments in their health, education and welfare.

In particular, we are able to examine the long-term effects of an important decision made by the tribe 20 years ago when they opened a new casino on the Qualla Boundary, which is their home

in North Carolina. Casino revenues were spent on tribal services in general, including behavioral health, drug abuse prevention, health care and education and social services. But in addition, every enrolled member of the tribe has each year received a proportion of the casino's profits for their own use and the use of their families.

So did this extra money that the tribal families received, around $4,000 a year per person, did it have an effect on children's health and development? We could answer that question with some confidence, because we could compare the children's emotional and behavioral problems before and after the income supplements began. We found that when families lived above the poverty line, their children had relatively few emotional and behavioral problems, and the added income made little difference. If families were so poor that even the income supplement did not raise them above the Federal poverty line, their children had a lot of problems, which continued even when the families received the additional income.

However, for the group of families who hovered near poverty, the cash supplement that lifted them above the Federal poverty line had a powerful effect in both the short and the longer term. In the years before the supplement, the children in these families had high levels of anxiety, depression and conduct problems. Four years after the supplement began, levels were no higher than in children who were never poor. The details of this can be found in an article of the Journal of the American Medical Association, which I appended to my testimony.

We have now followed these children into their 30s, and with the aid of economist Randy Akee of UCLA and Emilia Simeonova of Johns Hopkins University, we have shown that there were marked effects of this cash supplement in many areas of life, particularly for those who are the youngest when the supplement started. As adults, they used less alcohol and fewer drugs. They were less likely to commit minor crimes, and more likely to graduate from high school. Teen pregnancies were less common, and the IQ of this group, when measured at age 25, was a bit higher. Obesity, while unfortunately high in this part of North Carolina, increased less after the supplement was introduced.

You may well think that the investing $4,000 a year in a child or adolescent puts this sort of income supplement out of the question. So we have conducted a cost benefit analysis that tracks the cost of the supplement over the years against the savings resulting from it. We found that the cost of the supplement exceeded the dollar value of the benefits for the first four years, after which the value of the benefits relative to the cost steadily increased and soon substantially exceeded them to a total of some $20,000 by age 25.

What these data tell me is that we pay now or we pay later. Twenty years of research I think have made this result very clear.

Thank you for your attention, and I am happy to answer any questions.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Costello follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF E. JANE COSTELLO, PROFESSOR, DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHIATRY AND BEHAVIORAL MEDICINE; ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR FOR RESEARCH, CENTER FOR CHILD AND FAMILY POLICY, DUKE UNIVERSITY

Chairman Tester and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today. We are most grateful for your continued support of basic science like this, funded through the National Institutes of Health. My remarks today reflect my own views, not necessarily those of the NIH or Duke University.

The research that I will present to you carries a clear message: that when it comes to raising children to be independent citizens, we pay now, or we pay later. Let me explain. For 20 years we have studied the same group of 1,400 people living in the mountains of western North Carolina. 350 of them are American Indian, from the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians. The children whom we began to study in the 1990s have now grown into their 30s, and we are able to look at the long-term effects of investment in their health, education and welfare by the Tribe and the community. In particular, we are able to examine the long-term effects of an important decision made by the Tribe 20 years ago, when they opened a new casino on the Qualla Boundary, their home in North Carolina. Casino revenues were spent on tribal services including behavioral health, drug abuse prevention programs, health care, education, and social services. In addition, every enrolled citizen of the Tribe has each year received a proportion of the casino's profits.

Did the extra money that tribal families received (around $4,000 per person per year) have an effect on children's emotional and behavioral problems? We could answer the question with some confidence because we could compare children's emotional and behavioral problems before and after the income supplements began. We could also compare the Indian children with others, mainly Anglos, living in the surrounding counties. These, of course, were not tribal members and did not receive the supplementary family income from the casino. The focus of the study, funded by the National Institutes of Health, was on emotional and behavioral problems, and also on physical health and obesity, as well as school performance, crime, and education. We found that when Indian families lived above the poverty line, their children had relatively few problems and the added income made no difference. If families were so poor that even the income supplement did not raise them above the federal poverty line, their children had a lot of problems, which continued even when the families received additional income. However, for families that hovered near poverty, the cash supplement that lifted them above the federal poverty line had a powerful effect in both the short and longer terms. Four years before the supplement, children in these families had high levels of anxiety, depression, and conduct problems; four years after the supplement began, levels were no higher than those of children who were never poor. Details can be found in an attached article link from the Journal of the American Medical Association.

We have now followed these children into their 30s, and with the aid of economists Randall Akee of UCLA and Emilia Simeonova of Johns Hopkins University, we have shown that there were marked effects of the cash supplement in many areas of life, particularly for the youngest children. As adults, they used less alcohol and fewer drugs. They were less likely to commit minor crimes, and more likely to graduate from high school. Teen pregnancies were less common, and the IQ of this group, when measured at age 25, was a bit higher. Obesity, while high throughout the area, increased less after the supplement was introduced.

You may well think that the cost of investing $4000 a year in a child or adolescent puts this sort of program out of the question. However, Akee and Simeonova have tracked the costs of the supplement against the savings in expenditures on crime, drug abuse and mental health treatment, and medical care. They have found that after the first four years, when the cost of the supplement exceeded the dollar value of the benefits, the value of the benefits relative to the costs has steadily increased. The attached diagram link shows that by age 26, the latest age for which data are available, the benefits exceed the costs by a factor of three to one. For further details I would refer you to an article in the New York Times:

http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2014/01/18/what-happens-when-the-poor-receive-a-stipend/?smid=fb-share

We also include links to several academic papers describing the effects of the family income supplement.

Based on these data, we can choose to pay less now or pay more later. Our tax dollars can support poor families while their children are growing and developing. Or we can pay the higher costs of their lack of education, obesity, alcohol abuse, and crime in the health care and criminal justice systems and in loss of economic productivity down the road. Twenty years of research make the choice very clear.

I am happy to answer any questions or provide more information. Thank you for your attention.

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Akee R, Copeland WE, Keeler G, Angold A, & Costello EJ (2010). Parents' incomes and children's outcomes: A quasi-experiment. American Economic Journal: Applied Economics 2:86–115. PMCID: PMC2891175. *http://devepi.duhs.duke.edu/library/pdf/22924.pdf*

R. Akee, E. Simeonova, W. Copeland, A. Angold, E. J. Costello: Young adult obesity and household income: Effects of unconditional cash transfers. American Economics Journal: Applied Economics 2013, 5 (2): 1–28. *http://devepi.duhs.duke.edu/library/pdf/25623.pdf*

The CHAIRMAN. I want to thank you for your testimony. That is very interesting. I have a bunch of questions, but we are going to start with Mr. Wells.

You talked early on in your testimony about qualified, certified teachers: being hard to get them. I got the impression by your testimony that you are staffed up pretty well, though? You have them in the classroom?

Mr. WELLS. Yes.

The CHAIRMAN. How did you achieve it? It is a tough problem. How did you get them?

Mr. WELLS. Honestly, basically what we did was our Head Start program, we have very little turnover. The reason for that is because of the government's financial support. Our tribe puts in more money than we receive Federal money. Because of that we can raise our salaries and retain our teachers. That is the bottom line.

The CHAIRMAN. It is driven mostly by salary.

Mr. WELLS. And we have great working conditions. We have wonderful facilities, great fringe benefits.

The CHAIRMAN. One more question, you talked about child care and Head Start, and you talked about a program that sounds pretty darned good. What percentage of the population of need are you serving? Are you serving 100 percent of the need out there, or can you give me an idea?

Mr. WELLS. No. Probably 25 percent.

The CHAIRMAN. Twenty-five percent of the need. Okay.

Ms. Fabre, I believe it is important that all members of the Native community be considered in development policy. I appreciate the work that the National Indian Child Care Association has done to ensure this.

Are there any early childhood education issues that seem to affect only discrete portions of Indian Country, say Native Hawaiians or southeastern tribes?

Ms. FABRE. Yes. There are several. Just to talk about White Earth a little bit, we are a part of the Talle program, that is one in four tribes throughout Indian Country. I think that will be very helpful about breaking down the silos. There is the Head Start-Child Care collaboration grant that is coming out. That will be beneficial to a few tribes that do receive it.

The CHAIRMAN. You gave some examples of tribal organizations doing a lot with a little bit of money. Specifically, as it regards enrollment. Would an infusion of capital be enough to increase capacity? As we have seen with some tribes, infrastructure is a problem.

I think it is more than just a few of the tribes. So do you get my drift here?

If we have capital for, let's say to increase the number of teachers we have, would we also need to have capital for infrastructure?

Ms. FABRE. Yes. We also require teacher qualifications, and it costs more to pay teachers with credentials.

The CHAIRMAN. Yes.

Ms. FABRE. So of course that comes with high quality. We also need child care assistance. We have the funding for child care, CCDBG is critical in Indian Country right now. Because we are struggling with having to decide on quality versus quantity. It is always a balancing act.

The CHAIRMAN. Okay. Ms. Power, superintendent and principal at Blackwater Community School, been there for a number of years, 20, have you seen a cultural shift during your time there?

Ms. POWER. I have. And it really has come from the FACE program. We have had it so many years that the parents who have gone through this program are an integral part of our whole parent involvement. Many of them actually have ended up working for our school now, starting part-time, going to full-time. But because many of them have multiple children, they stay very connected to the school. One of our parents is a school board member.

But it really has changed how they look at school, because there was, when I first came there, most of the parents saw school as, you take care of the children and we will sit back. But the FACE program is so empowering. It was targeting most of the young parents that had dropped out of school and had no other options in front of them. So they come back, and this program is unique because it lifts the whole family. They are required to come to school every day with their children. So they now have a different perspective on school, and they are very much involved.

The CHAIRMAN. Okay, you have been there 20 years. How about the students? Maybe I should say the children of the parents.

Ms. POWER. Again, because the program certainly does, it actually starts at inception with home visiting, we have two home visitors and they work with those families until the children turn three, then they come into preschool with their child. Then we track them academically as they go into K–2 school with the Bureau of Indian Affairs. So we track them transitioning into kindergarten, to give them NWEA/DIBELS to see where they are. And we find those children are academically stronger.

The CHAIRMAN. Good. That is good. Senator Heitkamp?

Senator HEITKAMP. Just a couple of questions. One is the challenges of credentialing. I don't think there is any doubt about it, and I really applaud the programs that you have described as really requiring a high level. But what if we can't achieve that? Are we sacrificing quality? I will give you a for-instance. Right now, Mandan, Hidatsa and Arikira Nation, in the bowl of the Bakken, even if you could recruit a teacher, there is absolutely place for a four-year degree teacher to live. So with the standard of 50 percent, the Federal standard of 50 percent, they are finding it extraordinarily difficult to meet the Federal standard.

So do you give up and send the kids home? That is the real challenge here. Have you looked at any strategies to do home-grown

credentialing, or can we look at some other kind of strategy to make sure there are quality programs without having this hard and fast rule of 50 percent? I will start with you, Mr. Wells.

Mr. WELLS. That is basically what we are attempting to do, is home-grown. Because within our division of education, we have higher education. So we know what we are turning out, we know what we are paying for. So therefore, we have a list. We are looking for those students that we can encourage to come in and work for the tribe. So we are doing some of that.

In Ada, Ardmore, it is probably not quite as difficult, but in those little rural towns, it is really, really difficult, because people don't want to live there. They want to live in a little larger area. From my perspective, a retired school teacher, I think education is important no matter what. And yes, we absolutely want the top, we want the best that we can provide. But some is better than none. And I don't want to give up on a program that I think is successful. Child Care and Head Start both are extremely successful programs. They make a difference. They always made a difference and they will continue to make a difference.

The ideal scenario is we have totally qualified, certified teachers. That is what we are trying to get to. It is a challenge. It is going to be a challenge, it has been a challenge. We try to home grow them, we try to get people involved, we try to encourage our young people as they go through school to consider being a teacher.

Senator HEITKAMP. Mr. Wells, have you ever tried to stipend teachers? Kind of look at kids out of high school who may want to go to college, provide the resources for college with a commitment for——

Mr. WELLS. We pay a supplemental, is what we pay for all of our students—Chickasaw students—that go into college, we provide supplemental funding. We pay books, we pay fees, we pay—not all of them, that is why it is a supplemental program. We will pay up to 12 hours. So we are attempting to do what we can. I don't know if that answered your question or not.

Senator HEITKAMP. I am trying to get a commitment from you that if we just help transition these folks that maybe the 50 percent hard and fast rule is one that needs to have flexibility.

Mr. WELLS. I think it needs to have flexibility, absolutely.

We have kind of backed ourselves into a corner. We are making a requirement that is difficult to meet. If you talk to anyone in Indian Country, I think you will find even though we are successful, we are not completely successful. Right now, we are short a teacher. We have been trying to get a teacher identified for three months.

Senator HEITKAMP. It is so tough, because we want absolutely the highest quality. But we also don't want to credential our way out of a program.

Mr. WELLS. Absolutely.

Senator HEITKAMP. I think Ms. Fabre, obviously you have the same kind of level of challenge. Can you repeat a statistic? I was looking for that in your written testimony and couldn't find it quickly. It is the one on vocabulary.

Ms. FABRE. It is Dr. Risley's work, and it is children from high poverty areas, and children of color, particularly, are coming to

school with 3,000-word vocabulary, and middle class children are coming to school with a 20,000-word vocabulary. It is huge.

Senator HEITKAMP. And isn't it true among a lot of academicians, they will tell you they will never catch up? You start out that far behind and it is so extraordinarily difficult to catch up.

Ms. FABRE. I agree. But I have hope. Because our Early Childhood is making a difference.

Senator HEITKAMP. We can't have anything but that. But that is hope that you can in fact better prepare children into schools. But without that early childhood intervention, to try and say, okay, now you are going to go to first grade or kindergarten, and you are going to compete on this level for attention in the classroom, when you are so far behind in terms of your understanding of the language, even, there you are. It just I think reinforces the Chairman's observation and certainly the reason why I am here, this absolutely is the beginning of a change. If we don't do it here, we will continue to spin our wheels. We will continue to spend money on Title I, we will continue to spend money on prisons, we will continue to spend money on juvenile detention. And we will continue to be frustrated.

So I want to thank all of you for the tremendous work that you have done, for keeping hope and faith that we can in fact change this. It is for so many children the absolute hope of the future.

The CHAIRMAN. You are on a roll.

I have a few questions for Dr. Costello. Your research is incredibly interesting. You talked about a $4,000 stipend for 350 Cherokee out of 1,400 you dealt with. Do you know; what is the poverty line for a family of four?

Ms. COSTELLO. It varied from year to year across the 20 years of study, but around $25,000.

The CHAIRMAN. Could you give me just, I will let you flesh this out a little more, a little bit more about what you saw before and after the stipend when it came to early childhood development?

Ms. COSTELLO. I have to make a couple of caveats. The study starts later in age, we didn't start the study until they were nine. We want to do another study going back even earlier on.

The other thing I want to say is that we didn't go into this with funding to do this study. It emerged serendipitously out of our study of the development of the emotional and behavioral problems, which included the Eastern Band of Cherokee. And they did this thing of opening a casino and putting money into families, both into the community and into families. What we saw was, looking at the difference between before and after, a significant fall in the number of emotional and behavioral problems, conduct issues.

The CHAIRMAN. So let me ask you this, and you talked about the three different groups, folks that were already above the poverty line, the folks that were hovering around the poverty line, a little below, and the folk who were poor. And I believe your testimony talked about the folks above the poverty line did about the same after the stipend as before, and the folk who were very poor did about the same after the stipend. It was the folks you got above the poverty line that really made a difference.

I would assume this includes everything, teen pregnancy, drug abuse, scholastic underachievement, the works?

Ms. COSTELLO. Yes, it did.

The CHAIRMAN. Did you see any rise at all, any improvement, should I say, at all, as far as the folk who were extremely poor?

Ms. COSTELLO. Yes, but people don't stay in the same band, the same poverty band forever.

The CHAIRMAN. If they stayed in that poverty band, nothing improved?

Ms. COSTELLO. If they stayed in that poverty band, nothing shifted them. I think it is important to say that exactly the same patterns were seen in the White community that surrounds the Qualla Boundary. Because we studied 1,000 White kids too. So what I am saying is this was a general pattern. But we couldn't ascribe cause to it in the White community, because kids could have moved out of poverty because their families worked harder or something.

The CHAIRMAN. How widespread is the information you got? What I am asking is, have any of the agencies asked for it, or do you offer to pass it along? It looks like we have a lot of programs out there, we are spending a lot of money on them, maybe we ought to just give them a cash stipend.

[Laughter.]

Ms. COSTELLO. Well, it is an option.

[Laughter.]

Ms. COSTELLO. The thing is that the research to find out the answer to your question is extraordinarily expensive and time-consuming. This study, as I said, has gone on for 20 years and cost the Federal Government many millions of dollars. It is very difficult to set up an experiment where you say, well, let's assign some people randomly to be poor and some people randomly to be less poor.

The CHAIRMAN. So I am going to ask the question I meant to ask to begin with, and that is, it looks like you have some pretty interesting information, pretty informative information. You have spent a good potion of your life doing it. Who is using it?

Ms. COSTELLO. Well, the Nobel Prize-winning economic Jim Heckman from Chicago is using it to support his efforts, which you may be familiar with, to encourage early education, investment in early education. He actually uses our data for that.

The CHAIRMAN. Good. That is good, because it appears to me to be good research, and it should not end up in a file somewhere and not be paid attention to.

I want to thank the witnesses. We have a few other questions we will put in for the record, if you have the time.

Senator HEITKAMP. Mr. Chairman?

The CHAIRMAN. Yes, Senator Heitkamp.

Senator HEITKAMP. Could I just make a point?

The CHAIRMAN. You can ask another question if you like.

Senator HEITKAMP. Thank you. The Congress is currently considering, and this is to the doctor, currently considering a minimum wage increase. As you know, the current minimum wage is $7.25 an hour, which results, for a full-time worker, 40 hours a week, in $15,000. If the minimum wage increased that we are looking at, which is $10.10 an hour would actually be achieved, that would be a $6,000 increase in salary for that family that year. I am wondering, and I know this is a little off topic, but it seems to me that

your research would suggest that that influx of dollars could have a mammoth impact long term in terms of investment. So I just wanted to make that point.

Ms. COSTELLO. Thank you. I agree.

The CHAIRMAN. Point well taken. Thank you very much for your testimony.

In closing I would just say this, we appreciate everybody who testified today. When I first came to this Committee, Byron Dorgan was chairman and Craig Thomas was ranking member. Byron Dorgan was from North Dakota, Craig Thomas was from Wyoming. I often showed up and was the only member there from Montana, so it is interesting how the cards in the deck have been shuffled.

We thank you all for your testimony, appreciate it, and this isn't the last hearing we will have on it.

With that, the hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 3:43 p.m., the Committee was adjourned.]

A P P E N D I X

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. BRIAN SCHATZ, U.S. SENATOR FROM HAWAII

This is the first hearing of the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs with Senator Tester serving as our Chair. I look forward to working with Senator Tester in his new role, as well as continuing to work with Senator Barrasso as Vice-Chair. This committee has always been fortunate to have leaders from both sides of the aisle committed to bipartisan collaboration. I am very confident that Senators Tester and Barrasso will build upon that tradition and forge the kind of close and productive working relationship needed to make progress for native communities and address longstanding problems.

Thank you for holding this important hearing today. I support a strong federal commitment to early childhood development and education programs for native families. Such programs are an integral part of the trust responsibility of the United States and are fundamental to helping native children succeed, and native communities thrive.

I have had the opportunity to visit and observe early childhood development and education programs throughout my state. In addition, my wife and I have two young children. Like parents everywhere, we struggle to balance our responsibilities and the new challenges we must confront with our children on a daily basis. My experiences as a parent have only strengthened my resolve to make a positive difference in policies and programs designed to benefit children and help them get the best possible start in life.

Unfortunately, in far too many native communities across this nation, a lack of early childhood resources places native children at risk of falling behind other students from their first days in school. We must work together to build more opportunities for native children to learn and excel in school and fulfill their true potential.

Some of the steps to make a positive difference are clear. We must move forward reauthorization of early childhood development and education programs that have proven effective addressing disparities faced by Native Hawaiians, Alaska Natives, and American Indians. We must work hard to sustain funding levels, further strengthen existing programs, and establish new programs to build upon the foundation we have already established.

We must also ensure that limited federal spending is targeted to achieve the most positive outcomes. And the need to improve coordination, maintain meaningful tribal consultation and promote self-determination will be critical to our efforts to make early childhood development and education programs work better for native families.

We need to provide tribes and native communities with the tools and support needed to design programs in ways to best serve the needs and circumstances of native children in their communities. I have had the opportunity to visit and observe early childhood development and education programs serving Native Hawaiian children and families throughout my state. These programs are succeeding with at-risk children and defying the odds.

Programs serving the Native Hawaiian community focus on family literacy and provide an integrated model for early childhood development and education based on substantial parental involvement and participation. Hawaii is unique among the states in recognizing both its indigenous language and English as official languages. The Punana Leo preschools in Hawaii were the first preschool program in the United States to be conducted entirely through a Native American language. This statewide system of preschools has served as a model for Native American language preschools throughout our country. In short, the schools and programs I have observed are creative, innovative and modern, while at the same time rooted in Native Hawaiian culture, traditions and values.

Teaching a child, using his or her culture and Native language as a foundation, has proven its merit, including early literacy outcomes. That is why I am an original sponsor and strong supporter of S. 1948, the Native Language Immersion Student Achievement Act, introduced by Senator Tester. This bill would create a federal

grant program to support schools using Native languages as the primary language of instruction from preschool through university levels.

Our SCIA oversight responsibilities are broad and we must depend on a myriad of stakeholders to assist us in our work. So thank you for joining us here today and offering your oral and written testimony. I look forward to working with all of you to enhance educational opportunities and outcomes for American Indian, Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian students. Thank you.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF GINGER GOES AHEAD, PROGRAM MANAGER, CROW HEAD START PROGRAM

On behalf of children and families that reside within the exterior boundaries of the Crow Reservation, in Montana and Indian Country across the United States of America, here is written testimony of the issues and need for Early Childhood Educational opportunities within the Native population.

The Crow Head Start Program is a vital service to children and families that serve 304 students in four centers located in Crow Agency, Pryor, Lodge Grass and Ft. Smith. As of the December 2013 enrollment, there are 14,000 enrolled members of the Crow Tribe, and of those 540 Crow Tribal children are between the ages of 3–5 years old. They represent the future and the stability of the Crow Tribe and reservations across the country. Often children are facing barriers that affect the family structure and tribal communities. Knowledge of limited community resources present themselves in the lives of Natives across the United States as they change with funding sources and the quick depletion of program funds. The Crow Head Start Program employs 70 people, and is the second largest program within the Crow Tribe.

Poverty levels are substantial within the Crow Tribe. Currently, the unemployment rate is at 47 percent among total enrolled members. Of the 14,000 enrolled members there are currently 6,500 members who reside on the reservation over the age of 18 years old. Of those 6,500 tribal residents the unemployment rate is at 80 percent. When a person visits the Crow Reservation you immediately notice substandard buildings and homes. The high cost of improving infrastructure within the Crow Tribe has proved to be a barrier that all have to face. The ability to improve water systems, sewer systems and utilities are outstanding in cost. Transportation, safe housing, preventative health care, nutrition and negative stereo types are prominent issues children and their families face daily. The Crow Reservation is a rural entity with limited access to consistent community resources such as housing, preventative health care, educational and nutritional programs.

An opportunity and access to early childhood educational settings are crucial in changing mindsets, lives, communities and families within the reservation. The Crow Head Start Program partners with; Ronald Mc. Donald Care Mobile, Big Horn County Best Beginnings Coalition, Pryor School District, Lodge Grass School District, Hardin School Districts, STEP developmental services, WIC, HRDC and Crow/Northern Cheyenne Hospital, IHS and various Tribal and BIA Social Service programs to provide services to children and their families.

Early Childhood Educators; with the best of intentions are often under-qualified. This largely is due to the minimal opportunities of employment within the Crow Reservation. Often Crow Tribal members, who have received a college education, will move on to higher paying positions within the tribal systems, move onto the public school system with better benefits, or move into larger cities to gain employment and maintain better housing.

Furthermore, Crow Tribal members have access to health care but the quality of the services are that IHS provides are minimal. For instance, the Dental department is geared to serve people with emergency dental issues. It is rare to have obtained a dental appointment due to the process to schedule one. Appointments are given out once a month. A person needing to schedule a dental appointment must call the first Monday of the month precisely at 8 am. In doing so, a Tribal Member calls the Crow/Northern Cheyenne Hospital that has a voice recording service that does not properly transfer phone calls. I personally have not been able to get my children or myself, an appointment for 8 years and have only had access due to emergency dental issues, such as broken teeth with abscess. Preventative dental care is not a prominent service within Tribal communities. This is just one testimony to the quality of health care that the children and families of the reservation receive.

Additionally, federal reviewers come and assess the Crow Head Start Program, the classroom teacher/student interaction is scored on CLASS (Classroom Assessment Scoring System). This scoring system does not take into account the Native

culture and imposes ideologies of mainstream non-native ways of instructing students of this age. Two of the four domains; Classroom Behavior and Instructional Support, does not take cultural communication into account.

Crows are a quiet people, who speak when spoken to. Parents, elders and clan systems guide children predominantly through directed communication which reflects negatively within the CLASS scoring system. Naturally, adults tell children what needs to be done, rather than give the ability to make those decisions on their own. This gives children the boundaries they need in order to feel safe and secure resulting in less behavior problems.

Culturally, Crows are given the right to speak in public. Which; means in a public gathering, you must present your prayers and wishes, to a person given the right to speak. This person, usually a leader within the Clan or community, will then repeat your prayer or wish.

Crow Head Start students are a product of ancestors that were once educated in boarding schools against the will of the parents, thus; creating distrust of public educational systems. The seed that was once planted has reaped generations of Crow people; who have not only discouraged obtaining an education but also, the importance of attendance. This misunderstanding can only be changed continually, starting with young parents. Gearing young parents and their children to understand the importance of nutrition, safe and healthy lifestyle choices and academic preparedness is one way to break this mindset that hinders most Native people to achieve success outside the reservation.

The Crow Head Start Program has been placed on DRS (Designated Renewal System) within the Office of Head Start due to health and safety of the building, CLASS scores for teacher/student interaction, database implementation and effective parent services. In order to change these systems the Crow Head Start is working with FHI 360 to ensure a proper Head Start Program is being implemented. We have regular staff and parent trainings, implemented Child Plus data collection software, regular cleanings and improvements of the buildings.

However; those who work in the Crow Head Start Program, still struggle to provide a quality program due to the structural integrity of the Crow Center building, a failing boiler and aging buses. The transportation portion of our program continues to face ongoing major maintenance issues with providing service to ensure 85 percent attendance within the program standards. "Ensure a Quality Head Start Program, Serving the Crow Nation, Exists into the Future" is the goal of our program and with barriers we face daily become increasingly impossible.

Culturally, we as Native American's, are a beautiful people with many assets that most don't revere as essential, in training children in the way that they should go. Crow Culture has a clan system in place, which trains children as a village should and though our customs and ways may look and sound different from mainstream America. Kindergarten preparedness is the rising need for these children as they enter the private and public school systems. The Crow Head Start Program goal for this year and upcoming years, is to raise entrance scores for Crow children entering Kindergarten.

Thank you for your time and attention to the needs of the Crow children and their families and Native people across the Great United States of America.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF SHARON DARLING, PRESIDENT/FOUNDER, NATIONAL CENTER FOR FAMILIES LEARNING (NCFL)

The National Center for Families Learning (NCFL) is a non-profit organization dedicated to inspiring and engaging families to learn together. The family literacy approach harnesses the strength of parent-child bonds to help those who are most at risk of failing economically, emotionally, and socially. We build success by strengthening their confidence, increasing their ability, and broadening their outlook. The results have an impact on a personal level as well as a national one.

NCFL works in partnership with the Bureau of Indian Education to provide comprehensive center-based educational services to families. The FACE family literacy and family engagement model is focused on high-quality instruction for adults and children, professional development and evaluation. The primary goals of FACE are to support parents as the primary caregivers in their role as their child's first and most influential teacher; increase parent participation in their child's learning and expectations for academic achievement; support and celebrate the unique cultural and linguistic diversity of each community served; strengthen family-school-community connections; and promote lifelong learning. The program combines a unique approach to education by implementing an early childhood education approach and simultaneously meeting unmet academic needs of the parents. Adult students also address their parenting skills and support for their child which later extends into the school.

Since its inception, the FACE program has reached roughly 40,000 individuals from approximately 16,000 American Indian families. Parents have earned their GEDs, gained employment, learned how to support their children's language and literacy development, and increased school success. Children have received a host of educational services, been screened for early identification of developmental delays, strengthened their culture and community, and thrived in school.

An independent annual evaluation of the program by Research & Training Associates, Inc. demonstrates the success of the FACE program through increased literacy activities in homes; the narrowed gap on benchmarks in school readiness for young children including those primarily on rural reservations; and the reduced need for school-aged special education by 50 percent for children who were identified for early childhood special education prior to kindergarten. Furthermore, when compared to parents nationally, FACE parents are more involved in their child's education and participate in school events, help with homework, and serve on school committees.

BIE funds ongoing program evaluation to ensure continual service improvement. Findings from two FACE Impact Studies[1] demonstrated that participation in the FACE program "indirectly impacts children's school readiness through its direct, significant and meaningful impacts on preschool attendance, the number of books and literacy resources in the home and increased home literacy activity."

The FACE program has demonstrated significant impacts on adult participants as well, including parents' increased involvement in BIE schools when their children are of school age; increased acquisition of GEDs and jobs; and increased literacy activity in the home. Seventy-eight percent of FACE parents read to their children on a daily basis. Nationwide, only 36% of parents read to their children this frequently.

Based on standardized reading scores, FACE children enter school more prepared to learn than Non-FACE children. FACE children whose mothers did *not* have a high school diploma enter school with *average* preparation for kindergarten, while Non-FACE children whose mothers also did not have a high school diploma enter school with *below average* preparation. Additional impacts of the FACE program are ones likely to reduce future expenditures on costly remediation. For example, Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) children who participated in FACE were found to be half as likely to have Individual Education Plans (IEPs) at school entry as were ECSE children who did not participate in the FACE program.

The FACE program has an impact that improves lives and communities, and is strongly based in evidence. It is the goal of NCFL and the FACE program to provide every family with the opportunity to learn, and the ability to learn and grow together. Programs such as FACE are the vehicles that can enable families to become self-sufficient and break the cycle of poverty while preserving heritage and culture.

[1] Pfannenstiel, J., Yarnell, V., Stromberg-Kettelhake, R., and Lambson, T. (2006). Impact Study of the Family and Child Education Program. Washington, DC: Department of Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Office of Indian Education Programs.

Pfannenstiel, J. and Yarnell, V. (2009). Impact Study of the Family and Child Education Program. Overland Park, KS: Research & Training Associates, Inc.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE NATIONAL INDIAN EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

The National Indian Education Association (NIEA) appreciates the work of the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs for recently holding a hearing on "Early Childhood Development and Education in Indian Country: Building a Foundation for Academic Success." We request this written testimony be submitted into the record. NIEA is the most representative and inclusive Native education organization in the United States. NIEA's principal goal is to advance comprehensive and equal educational opportunities for American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian students. Through this vision, NIEA supports sovereignty over education by strengthening traditional Native cultures and values that enable Native learners to become contributing members of their communities.

The Federal Government must uphold the United States' trust responsibility to Native education and including early education within that context is critically important. Research suggests that early education is the most effective and cost-efficient investment the Federal Government and Native communities can make because providing a strong education foundation increases a student's future academic success, quality of life, and ability to attain college and careers.

The State of Native Education

Native education is in a state of emergency. Native students lag far behind their peers on every educational indicator, from academic achievement to high school and college graduation rates. Just over 50 percent of Native students are graduating high school, compared to nearly 80 percent for the majority population nationally. Further, only 1 in 4 Native high school graduates who took the ACT scored at the college-ready level in math, and only one-third in reading as compared to more than half for white graduates. This resulted in only 52 percent of Native students enrolling immediately in college in 2004.

Increasingly alarming, only 40 percent of those students actually graduated college with a bachelor's degree by 2010. Nearly 62 percent of White students graduated. For Native students to succeed in secondary and post-secondary education, they must have a strong foundation in early childhood learning. A child's brain grows the fastest in the first five years of life, and research shows that high quality early education has a positive impact on a child's cognitive, social, and emotional development to help prepare for success in school and in life.

Equity in Early Education

Cultural Inclusion and Familial Engagement

Early childhood education models should advance the unique linguistic and cultural identities of Native children and students, so that our children are educated in their Native language as well as English and use assessment tools appropriate to the language of instruction. Models should support multiple delivery systems, such as family-child interaction learning programs and home visit programs that have strong familial engagement components and display measurable success rates. Instruction in early childhood education can be delivered in a multitude of models, which take advantage of and reinforce the fact that families have a critical support role in a child's education, particularly during their formative years. Research illustrates that actively including families throughout a child's early education will improve verbal, motor, and adaptive skills as well as guarantee greater academic success in subsequent years.

Collaboration Opportunities

Indian head start and early childcare programs, as well as tribal education agencies, have decades of experience providing early educational opportunities to Native children. Tribal inclusion is particularly imperative for achieving the goals introduced in recent grant competitions, like Race to the Top—Early Learning Challenge, which seeks to prepare more children for kindergarten and build a strong foundation for educational success. For Native students in tribal communities, tribal partnership and input exemplifies locally directed education and is critical to developing a student-centered learning environment that meets Native children's unique cultural and linguistic needs.

As the Department of Education continues to administer programs and grant competitions, it is essential that the federal agency recognizes the right of tribes to govern their individual programs under self-governance grants under Public Law 100–297 or Public Law 93–638 self-determination contracts. Ensuring tribes are in the position to work effectively and efficiently with all federal agencies—as they do with the Department of Health and Human Services to administer Indian Head Start programs—is essential as tribes expand authority over their local education systems.

Congress should also ensure early education partners are working with Native-serving institutions of higher education, such as Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs), because tribal citizens and reservation residents often choose to attend TCUs as they are local, affordable institutions of higher education. Collaborating with these institutions would help ensure that partnerships include stakeholders that better understand Native students' needs. Further, partnerships with TCUs would, in turn, support TCU students and result in a culturally cognizant workforce that better understands and works within early education systems.

Full Funding

The Head Start model, with its holistic approach, has been extraordinarily effective in Native communities. Head Start has been and continues to play an instrumental role in Native education by combining education, health, and family services to model traditional Native education—accounting for its success. While sequestration was stymied for the next two fiscal years, it is critical Congress permanently replaces the sequester to protect Native education programs, like Head Start, from future reductions.

Current funding dollars provide less for Native populations as inflation and fiscal constraints increase, even though research suggests there is a return of at least $7

for every single dollar invested in Head Start. NIEA requests Head Start and Early Head Start funding levels to be increased to $9.6 billion to replace the disparaging effects of sequestration and provide upfront federal investment in Native children and avoid more costly social interventions in the future. This additional funding would allow early education to reach more tribal communities and help more Native people by triggering the Indian special expansion funding provisions (after a full Cost of Living Allowance has been paid to all Head Start programs).

Increased Access

Early education programs must ensure equal access for Native communities and Native-serving institutions in order to better serve our populations. For example, the Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) is ineligible for the Department of Education's Race to the Top competitions. This exclusion fails to honor both the Federal Government's trust responsibility to provide Native children with a quality education as well as Executive Order 13592, "Improving American Indian and Alaska Native Educational Opportunities and Strengthening Tribal Colleges and Universities," which aims to leverage and coordinate federal resources to expand educational opportunities for Native students.

While the BIE does not operate Head Start programs, the agency operates 44 Family and Child Education (FACE) programs, which are designed as integrated models for an early childhood and parental involvement program assisting Native families in BIE-funded schools. These programs promote the early identification of children with special needs to provide appropriate services as well as deliver support for the unique cultural and linguistic diversity of each Native community served by the program.

NIEA requests that the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs and Congress ensure that tribes and the BIE are explicitly included as Congress develops early education models, provides oversight to federal agencies administering grant competitions, and works with the Administration as it proposes new initiatives, like the recently proposed $300 million FY 2015 Race to the Top—Equity and Opportunity competition. Because the competition is aimed at improving the academic performance of students in the nation's highest poverty schools, Congress should ensure that tribes and the BIE are eligible entities to compete and better serve the nation's highest-need and most vulnerable students—Native children.

Conclusion

Once again, NIEA appreciates the continued leadership of this Committee and we look forward to working closely with its members under the leadership of Chairman Jon Tester and Vice-Chairman John Barrasso. We share your commitment to advancing early learning and making improvements to ensure the programs serving Native communities are the most efficient and effective as possible.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF JACKI HAIGHT, PRESIDENT, NATIONAL INDIAN HEAD START DIRECTORS ASSOCIATION

Introduction

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on behalf of the National Indian Head Start Directors Association (NIHSDA). The American Indian and Alaska Native Head Start program continues to be one of the most effective programs in Indian Country. Using a model that is akin to the holistic approach of most Native communities, Indian Head Start provides critical family and social services. Indian Head Start is also on the frontline in the preservation of Native language and culture, which have proven to be key elements in Native student confidence and success in later years.

Indian Head Start programs have been a vital part of Head Start since its inception in 1965, and they have a wealth of expertise to offer regarding early childhood education. Founded in 1979, NIHSDA has decades of experience as the voice of Indian programs within the Federal Head Start Bureau, National Head Start Association, and other early childhood development associations and Indian organizations. NIHSDA welcomes the opportunity to work with the Committee to advance thinking and legislation in the area of early childhood education.

The Importance of Head Start

Indian Head Start is the most important and successful Federal program focused on the dire circumstances faced by all too many Native children, principally by addressing health, education, family, and community needs in a holistic manner akin to traditional Native learning styles and cultural practices.

- *Native children are the most at-risk population in the United States.* Native children confront serious disparities in education, health, and safety. From 2000–2012, child mortality in the United States decreased by 9 percent while the child mortality rate among Native children increased 15 percent. Thirty-seven percent of Native youth live in poverty, and Native youth suffer suicide at a rate 2.5 times the national average. Fifty-eight percent of 3- and 4-year-old Native children do not attend any form of preschool. The graduation rate for Native students is 50 percent. Native children disproportionately enter foster care at a rate more than 2.1 times that of the general population and have the third-highest rate of victimization.
- *Indian reservations suffer from depression-era economics, with terrible crime and health statistics to match.* The Indian reservation poverty rate is 31.2 percent, nearly three times the national average of 11.6 percent. The Indian reservation rate is comparable to the national rate at the height of the Great Depression. The Indian reservation unemployment rate is approximately 50 percent, ten times the national unemployment rate of 5.2 percent (and on some reservations the rate is 80–90 percent). When you consider that 31.2 percent of Indian families live in poverty and that high levels of poverty bring significant problems to reservations where few resources are available, a need arises for Head Start to address chronic community social issues.
- *Most Indian communities are remotely located* and there are no other resources besides Head Start to address the special needs of young Indian children who, on a daily basis, must deal with the conditions described above.
- *The synergistic confluence of all of these negative factors is overwhelming.* Indian Head Start may be the best Federal program in place that actually addresses the dire situation in much of Indian country, but more resources are needed.

The Federal Government's Unique Responsibility to Indian People

The Federal Government has a unique responsibility to Indian peoples based on the Constitution of the United States, treaties, federal statutes, executive orders, Supreme Court doctrine, and international law. This responsibility is particularly important in the area of Indian education.

- *The Federal Government has a trust responsibility, especially in the education area.* The solemn obligations of the Federal Government, often expressed in treaties and other agreement, define the Federal Government's trust obligation to protect the interests of Indian peoples, especially in the area of education. These obligations have sadly been ignored for far too long, and the impacts on Native children have been staggering.
- *The Federal Government has a government-to-government relationship with tribes.* The Constitution, treaties, and other sources of federal and international law set forth the recognition of Indian tribes as sovereign nations with inherent powers of self-governance. The Federal Government has committed to a government-to-government relationship that manifests itself in many ways, including direct and meaningful consultation between Federal agencies and tribes on legislation, regulatory policy, and other actions that may significantly impact tribal communities.
- *The Federal Government historically has displayed a keen understanding of the central importance of our ancient ways, beliefs, culture and language to tribal unity and strength and for years made every effort to destroy those beliefs.* This effort to kill our minds and our spirits failed, but not without first doing great damage. Indian languages are in retreat. Native students perform far below their potential. Federal paternalism has created a crippling mentality for some in Indian country that is founded on poor self-esteem. Extraordinarily, the Native spirit has endured and, in recent years, grown stronger. Much of the harm inflicted upon Native peoples is being undone, to the extent it can be undone, by Native people themselves. And yet the resources needed to complete this great task can only be found with the originator of the harm—the Federal Government.
- *It is a mark of America's unique character that the racist policies of the past have been replaced with more humane policies. For example, Title VII of the NCLB provides:* "It is the policy of the United States to fulfill the Federal Government's unique and continuing trust relationship with and responsibility to the Indian people for the education of Indian Children. The Federal Government will continue to work with local educational agencies, Indian tribes and organizations, postsecondary institutions, and other entities toward the goal of ensuring that programs that serve Indian children are of the highest quality

and provide for not only the basic elementary and secondary educational needs, but also the unique educational and culturally related academic needs of these children." (NCLB, Section 7101).

Funding Priorities for Head Start

In 2014, $8.59 billion was enacted for Head Start funding, restoring Head Start to its FY 2012 funding level, plus a 1.3 percent inflation adjustment. This much-needed restoration marked a significant shift away from the devastating effects of sequestration upon Head Start programs across the country. As programs begin to recover from sequestration, it is critical to safeguard these advances by providing sufficient Head Start funds for FY 2016.

- *The Indian Head Start funding formula.* The American Indian and Alaska Native Head Start program receives its funding through a formula established in the Head Start Act for the distribution of Head Start funds. That formula provides for Indian Head Start to receive special expansion funds to make up for errors in the application of the formula over a decade ago. These expansion provisions were limited in time and did not take into account what happens when the initial authorization under the Head Start Act expired. The AIAN program has not yet received the full benefit of these provisions and their intent. Indian Head Start requests that Head Start be funded at a level that would achieve the goals of the special expansion funding provisions of the Head Start Act. As a general matter, there should be a sufficient increase in funding to make up for the effects of inflation over the last several years.
- *The Indian Head Start program profile.* Only about 16 percent of the age-eligible Indian child population is enrolled in Indian Head Start. Of the approximately 566 federally recognized Tribes, only about 188 have Head Start programs funded through 150 grantees in 26 states. That means approximately 378 Tribes do not have Head Start available for their age-eligible children. These programs employ approximately 6,627 individuals and 331 contracted people: 3,191of these employees and 86 people under contract are former or current Head Start/Early Head Start parents. There are approximately 34,901 volunteers, 22,942 of which are parents, working in the American Indian/Alaska Native Head Start programs.

Considerations for Head Start Reauthorization and Expansion

As the Committee considers matter related to both Head Start reauthorization and expansion of early childhood education programs, it should consider the following matters with regard to maintaining a foundation for success for Indian Head Start programs:

- *The need for consistent and flexible funding.* Head Start programs have suffered from inconsistent funding. Funding levels must be sustained and built upon to ensure that programmatic gains are not lost in subsequent years. Additionally, there is a need for flexibility in how expansion funds are spent and how funds are allocated between Head Start and Early Head Start programs.
- *The need to provide a physical foundation for success.* Many Indian Head Start programs operate out of the oldest buildings on their reservations. Lack of adequate physical facilities for Head Start programs hinders the ability of these programs to meet the very specific health and safety needs of young children. Without the necessary physical infrastructure, programs struggle to furnish the quality academic foundation that Head Start seeks to provide Indian children.
- *The need to maintain and sustain program quality in effective and culturally appropriate ways.* Tribes are deeply committed to providing excellent programs for their youngest population. The government-to-government consultation with regard to how accountability standards are maintained is one of the great strengths of the prior Head Start reauthorization. As programs expand, and as Indian Head Start increases language immersion programs, there needs to be a dialogue about how to reliably measure program quality in culturally diverse environments and in culturally appropriate ways.

Conclusion

Thank you for this opportunity to share the nature and needs of the American Indian and Alaska Native Head Start program. Its value to Indian Country is beyond measure. We urge your prioritization of Head Start as you consider ways to improve the educational infrastructure of Indian Country. We would welcome the opportunity to provide further information by testifying as witnesses at the Committee's future hearings.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF NĀMAKA RAWLINS, ʻAHA PŪNANA LEO, INC.

'Auhea 'oukou e ka Lunaho'omalu Kenekoa Tester, Hope Lunaho'omalu Kenekoa Barrasso a me nā lālā o ke Kōmike 'Ilikini o ka 'Aha Kenekoa o 'Amelika Hui Pū 'Ia, aloha mai kākou, iā 'oe e Kenekoa Schatz ke aloha pumehana,

Greetings Senator Tester, Vice Chairman Barrasso and members of the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs, aloha, Senator Schatz,

Please accept my sincere gratitude to be able to share this testimony on the 'Aha Pūnana Leo's efforts over the last 30 years in the movement to revitalize the Indigenous and endangered Hawaiian language starting with the babies and the young children in their early learning and developmental years. My name in Nāmaka Rawlins. I am the Director of Strategic Partnerships and Collaborations of the 'Aha Pūnana Leo. I provide this testimony for the record, **emphasizing the strength of Hawaiian language early education and care in improving high school graduation and college attendance among Native Hawaiians.**

'Aha Pūnana Leo is a non-profit Native Hawaiian educational organization established in Hawai'i in 1983. Over the last 30 years, we have demonstrated an excellent and innovative program of community driven early learning and care based on the traditions and practices of the Hawaiian culture, its people and language. The language is at the core and is used exclusively as the medium of instruction. We have seen the number of children speakers increase from less than 50 children below the age of 18 to thousands over these last 30 years. Furthermore, at our model preschool through grade 12 (P-12) Hawaiian language medium demonstration site Nāwahīokalani'ōpu'u School, we have since the first graduation class in 1999 produced a fifteen-year record of 100% high school graduation and 80% college attendance.

The 'Aha Pūnana Leo is the only statewide provider of early education through the medium of Hawaiian. We administer 11 statewide full day early childhood education center based language nests programs. The University of Hawai'i's Hawaiian Language College provides B.A. M.A. & Doctoral degrees, an Indigenous teacher education certification, a laboratory school program including the K-12 Ke Kula 'O Nāwahīokalani'ōpu'u and houses the state's Hawaiian language curriculum and testing center, Hale Kuamo'o. This preschool through doctorate (P-20) Hawaiian Medium education continuum is a promising model of Native American language (American Indian, Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian) revitalization, reversing language loss while

exceeding the nation's Native student high school graduation rate and college admission rate. We are the most developed program in any Native American language with special strengths in early childhood, secondary programming, teacher training, assessments, and graduate education.

Hawaiian is an official language in the state of Hawai'i. Hawai'i's educational system includes two distinct language pathways and schools in which the rich language and culture of Hawai'i are the foundation and the medium of instruction in the Hawaiian language pathway schools.

We have worked over the years with other Native American language communities. Well established immersion programs currently exist for languages such as Mohawk in New York, Cherokee in Oklahoma and North Carolina, Ojibwe in Wisconsin and Minnesota, Arapaho in Wyoming, three languages in Montana namely Blackfeet, Salish, and Atsina/Gros Ventre, Navajo in Arizona, Chinuk Wawa in Oregon, two languages in Alaska, namely Central Alaskan Yup'ik and Inupiaq. Many other tribes have just started or are working to do so, including Lakota speaking tribes in North and South Dakota, the Sauk and Choctaw tribes in Oklahoma, and various tribes in other parts of the country.

Many other Native American communities continue to lose their languages through language shift whose root cause is an education designed through English rather than through the Native American languages official for their tribes. Accelerated loss of Native American languages has been associated with the primacy of English in preschools.

Thirty years of experience here in Hawai'i providing total Hawaiian language medium early childhood education and follow up programs through Hawaiian has shown that students can retain Hawaiian through such schooling and go on to learn English and other languages as additional languages later on in their schooling. They graduate fully fluent in both English and Hawaiian and attend English medium colleges.

The innovation of an early education based in the endangered Native American language and culture at the most critical time of brain development and language acquisition of young children must be supported with good early education policies. There must be provisions of early childhood education totally through the medium of Native American languages, based on standards and assessments designed uniquely for those languages. There must be provisions for Native American languages with a highly fluent administration and provided by teachers whose first qualification is high fluency in the Native American language of instruction. It is also important that indigenous international accreditation authorities be included in standards for quality assurance for these Native American early education and care programs. Expanding beyond the national mainstream framework of quality will provide these programs the opportunity to work with indigenous international standards and with these experts in reviewing their programs for quality. These good policies are crucial to the survival of Native American languages.

Thank you for allowing me to provide written testimony.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF DR. KANOE NĀONE, CEO, INPEACE

INPEACE, the Institute for Native Pacific Education and Culture, a Native Hawaiian statewide non-profit, supports an equitable high-quality preschool program that works exceptionally in Native communities and communities of color and poverty.

Research shows that 85 percent of the brain is developed by the time children turn 5. As a former Hawaiian Immersion Department of Education elementary teacher and as a mother I have seen the benefits of early education and what happens when children don't have access to quality learning. The single largest impact on the well-being of our K–12 system is access to early childhood education. By providing families especially those in Native and low income areas, access to early learning where parenting education and empowerment is core, we can dramatically

and positively shift the well-being of the children in those schools and areas. We believe an equitable early learning system is of critical importance to the success of our children and the economic future of our state.

INPEACE programs serve 4,500 people each year on 5 islands, including: new mothers; single moms; non-traditional students, those returning to school to improve their lives and better their families; and families dealing with a variety of socio-economic challenges. Although we welcome everyone into our programs and even have lots of dads and grandpas, the majority of the participants are women, children and Native Hawaiian. Our programs focus on early childhood education, workforce development, and cultural land stewardship; and all share the values of community empowerment and cultural enrichment. Our premier early childhood program is called Keiki Steps.

Keiki Steps is a free parent participation preschool for children ages birth through five. It supports families in becoming their child's first teacher through school readiness activities that are culturally relevant. Instead of dropping children off at a center to be cared for, our families and extended families bring the children typically to the local school where their older elementary age children are being dropped off and stay for 3 hours a day Monday through Thursday with a parent education or field trip every other Friday. So many of our families want to keep their young children with them instead of handing them over to others to care for them, so when both parents work, they typically have grandparents or other immediate family members care for their children. With our program, those caregivers or parents bring the children to our parent participation preschool also known as a Family Child Interaction Learning Program (FCIL). Ninety five percent of the staff in Keiki Steps were once parents in the program and through the organization's professional development program they are supported and required to earn a Child Development Associate certificate within 18 months of employment, and then receive continued financial support in obtaining Associate's and Bachelor's degrees. As a result, this is also seen as a community economic development program and social justice program. Here is a short video showing our program in action because so many people have a hard time understanding just what we are: *http://youtu.be/—p7Mv42ZaSU*.

Our annual cost of $2,400 per child is ⅓ of what typical center based care costs are, making it an economically viable option for funding. We also have conservatively $2,500 dollars of volunteer hours per child ($8.00 hour rate like that of a teachers aid) in the program because parents/caregivers are required to "volunteer" alongside their child for all hours of operation. Of note, with this model we have statistically significant outcomes for the children in our program with a substantial increase for children with multiple years of participation as evidenced in the increase in pretest scores from year to year. We use the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT), a nationally normed and validated test that is the only test that is a predictor of 3rd grade reading scores. While we also have cultural outcomes, we show that with our cultural approach to early education we are able to get our children ready for and successful in the mainstream DOE education system by utilizing a mainstream standardized test.

Here are our PPVT results. We annually serve 750 children and an equal number of their parents/caregivers.

Year	Pre-test Mean NCE [percentile] (standard deviation)	Post-test Mean NCE [percentile] (standard deviation)
2007-2008	44.9 [40 %ile] (17.4)	52.9 [55 %ile] (22.2)
2008-2009	40.6 [33 %ile] (19.2)	48.9 [47 %ile] (19.2)
2009-2010	45.8 [42 %ile] (21.9)	55.9 [61 %ile] (24.7)
2010-2011	49.3 [47 %ile] (20.6)	58.1 [66 %ile] (20.6)
2011-2012	49.4 [47 %ile] (21.1)	56.2 [61 %ile] (19.4)
2012-2013	52.0 [54 %ile] (19.30)	62.0 [72 %ile] (20.1)
2013-2014	51.8 [54 %ile] (21.1)	Data pending post testing in May 2014

As a Family Child Interaction Learning (FCIL) program provider, INPEACE supports equity in preschool options for families because we understand the value of this program in providing vital and culturally responsive services to some of the

state's highest need populations. We are able to achieve success via FCILs by empowering families with the knowledge they need in order to support their children throughout school and life. Collectively, there are 6 organizations whom are a part of 'Eleu (a Native Hawaiian early childhood consortium) and collectively we annually serve more than 25,000 children and their families in the state of Hawaii, almost entirely funded by the USDOE Native Hawaiian Education Program. We ask for continued support from this program but also advocate for this option to be eligible for funding through the Presidents new Early Learning Program. Our FCILs are strategically placed in underserved areas where there are high concentrations of Native Hawaiians and minority populations. As a result, these families have access to FREE & high quality early childhood education, a critical need in at-risk areas. Support of FCILs in the Federal expansion of high-quality preschool sends a clear message that the federal government understands the needs of the community and is willing to diversify the early learning options based on family need and choice!

Including FCILs as an option for early learning will move our country one step closer to building a viable early learning system. We have met with folks around the country who are requesting FCILs in their state (in both Indian Country and other communities of color) because they see the value and impact in has made in like communities. We know this option will meet families' diverse needs and values to effectively serve the community more broadly and support the success of our most at-risk children. We support a system that provides families with culturally responsive, high-quality early learning opportunities that enables healthy, successful development, and the ability of each child to reach their full potential.

Thank you for this opportunity to submit written testimony.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF WILLEEN WHIPPLE, SENIOR MANAGER—TRIBAL AFFILIATIONS, PARENTS AS TEACHERS NATIONAL CENTER

My name is Willeen Whipple and I am the Senior Manager of Tribal Affiliations for Parents as Teachers National Center. I am an enrolled member of the Blackfeet Nation of Montana and part of the Sicangu Lakota or Rosebud Sioux Tribe of South Dakota.

My work through the years at Parents as Teachers has included working on the home-based portion of the Bureau of Indian Education Family and Child Education (FACE) project, the Investing in Innovations (i3) Department of Education validation grant awarded to Parents as Teachers (BabyFACE), and partnering with tribes and Urban Indian Organizations implementing tribal home visiting programs. Parents as Teachers in Tribal communities includes: forty-three FACE programs, twenty i3 programs, thirteen Tribal Maternal Infant Early Childhood Home Visiting Programs in ten states, eight Region XI Early Head Start Programs, and twenty-seven Tribally-operated affiliates. Program support is also provided for fifteen Alaska Programs serving Alaska Natives and six Hawaii programs serving Native Hawaiians.

Although I can't speak for all 121 programs using the Parents as Teachers model, I have witnessed or heard about the impact Parents as Teachers has made throughout Indian Country. For example, in the last program year a South Dakota i3 program has facilitated adult education outcomes including: six GED's, one Criminal Justice degree BS, 4 AA degrees from the Sisseton-Wahpeton Tribal College, and one Certified Nursing Assistant CNA certificate. We have also seen increased parent involvement in the elementary schools. Research shows parents who are involved in their child's early learning experiences continue their involvement throughout their child's entire learning process.

Another area of impact is early literacy and school readiness. These are important goals of the Parents as Teachers model and they are funded goals of the FACE and BabyFACE programs. While book-sharing is a piece of every PAT personal visit, continuation beyond the visit is only possible if there are books in the home. According to the 2004–2005 U.S. Census, 60 percent of the homes of American Indian Kindergartners have 25 or fewer books, compared to 25 percent of homes nationally that have as few. High quality children's books are therefore provided to each enrolled FACE and BabyFACE child every month. Every week parent educators in these programs see results such as: adults in homes with no books build book shelves to hold their growing children's book collection; one- and two-year-old children begin to choose favorite books to bring to their parents to read; two-year-olds "read" a favorite book, turning the pages as they tell the story; parents who were afraid to even try reading a children's book to their child begin to read with enough expression and enthusiasm to keep their child's interest.

Meaningful impact also occurs around Parents as Teachers programs' collaboration with tribal, federal, and state agencies to provide quality care for families. Pro-

grams work directly with tribal early intervention programs, tribal health clinics, and Indian Health Service IHS. Hearing and vision screening results are shared with parents and referrals for further screenings are made when necessary. Screenings and Resource Networking are two of the four PAT components.

Parents as Teachers supports Tribal programs in their effort to make cultural adaptations and enhancements during the activities and delivery of family personal visits. Our model is an evidence-based model often blended with Native curricula including: Positive Indian Parenting and Fatherhood is Sacred. Tribes make their programs culturally and linguistically competent using Native language and practices.

In conclusion, there is a varied need at the program level to seek funding and continue work in Tribal communities. The stakes are high for Native families and a continued investment in home visiting programs, as determined by the tribes, provides increased positive education and health outcomes for indigenous families.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF WENDY ROYLO HEE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, NATIVE HAWAIIAN EDUCATION COUNCIL

Aloha Chairman Tester and members of the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs, Mahalo, thank you, for allowing us an opportunity to submit comments at your oversight hearing on "Early Childhood Development and Education in Native Country: Building a Foundation for Academic Success."

The Native Hawaiian Education Council (NHEC) strongly supports Early Childhood Education. A child's brain grows the fastest in the first five years of life, and research shows that high quality early education has a positive impact on a child's cognitive, social, and emotional development to help prepare for success in school and in life.

Last year, NHEC worked with partner organizations to adopt policy statements that urge Federal and State backing of early education, particularly to:

1.) Advance the unique linguistic and cultural identities of Natives and acknowledge that children can be ready in either their Native tongue or English, and use assessment tools appropriate to the language of instruction. In 1978, Hawaiian was adopted as an official language of Hawai'i, and children in Hawai'i can receive an excellent education in either of Hawai'i's official languages. Common sense dictates that assessments should be conducted in the language of instruction for a truer measure of achievement.

2.) Set aside funds for Native populations, including Native Hawaiians, and require states with Native American, Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian populations to consult with them in the development of their state plans. Native Americans, Alaska Natives and Native Hawaiians all have a special status by virtue of their trust relationship with the U.S. government and thus should be consulted on matters that involve Federal funds.

3.) Support multiple delivery systems, including but not limited to, family-child interaction learning programs and home visit programs that have a strong family/parent engagement component that is measured through an assessment tool. Instruction in early childhood education can be delivered in a multitude of models, including family-child interaction learning programs and home visits, which take advantage of and reinforce the fact that families are the primary educators of their children, particularly during their formative years. Research shows that involving families in early education is important and linked to improved verbal, motor, and adaptive skills as well as greater academic success later in school. Supporting families in their ability to educate their children has strong cultural foundations.

Attached are the policies and resolutions adopted by the National Indian Education Association; the Council for Native Hawaiian Advancement; and the Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs.* The last group is a national one with approximately 70 clubs, almost half of which are on the continental U.S. that range from California to Tennessee.

In March 2013, Senator Mazie Hirono introduced S. 519, the Pre-K Act to direct the U.S. Secretary of Education to award matching grants to states to enhance or improve State-funded preschool programs. The bill set forth some excellent provisions, such as giving priority to states that have curricula aligned with State early learning standards; use nationally-established or best practices; and require each teacher to have a degree in early childhood education or a related field. In Novem-

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*The information referred to has been retained in the Committee files.

ber 2013, a bipartisan group of legislators introduced the Strong Start for America's Children Act that incorporates many of the provisions of the Pre-K Act. The subsequent bill includes provisions that support Native Hawaiians even more than the Pre-K Act by including Native Hawaiians in the eligibility for Native set asides; requiring Native consultation in the development of the state plans; and includes funding for diverse providers.

We are pleased that the Senate is proposing measures to provide for early childhood education, particularly in Native Country. This step is needed, not only because of the effort for Native peoples to achieve educational parity with the rest of the nation, but also because of the trust relationship between the United States and this country's first people. Mahalo nui, thank you very much, for your time and consideration.